We can't keep doing this

by Havenlyfics

Summary

It's not been easy, carving out one's existence in the end of the world; and when Delle finds herself imprisoned by a group calling themselves the Saviors, she can't believe her bad luck.

But the last person she expected to see ruling over a new world order was her gym teacher.

Notes
This is gonna go slow and have a fuck ton of flashbacks. Letting yall know now.

See the end of the work for more notes.
Chapter 1

The end of the world hadn't made the Virginia sun any less hot; sometimes she wished it had been a nuclear winter that had caused the apocalypse.

"Not these fucking walkers," she grunted, a heavy swing of her cleaver slicing the corpse's head clean in half. It had come with three friends, long dead mouths gnashing and gaping for her still living flesh. But her Fang was hungry today as she eagerly cut down the walkers like they were unruly weeds.

Satisfied that the building she'd just broken into was now free of the undead, she took up her exploration in earnest. An unmarked building often meant an office; and an office often meant vending machines. With days between her last meal, she prayed she was right.

"C'mon boys!" She called to her travelling companions, banging the dull edge of her blade against the steel door; they tagged along dutifully, Marco guarding the door as Harold and Dillon helped her in her search. Like so many other buildings, the first floor had been ransacked, but looters so often left the upper floors bare. The stairs that lead there were dusty and coated with cobwebs, and she began to hope ever slightly for food.

"Harold, do a scope," she commanded, pointing to the doorway to the upper levels. He shifted in his place, hands nervously gripping his gun; just like every man, standing around and playing with his toy. "Oh for fuck's sake I'll do it myself."

She stepped slowly, silently up the steps, her ears keening for the rasping growl of biters; nothing yet. The top floor was carpeted, so untouched no one had even bothered to smash the computers. She celebrated herself for her find.

"Come on boys! Get your hands off your dicks and come help me!" She shouted; she'd always had a commanding presence, and these three were not about to survive without a leader. The two scampered up the stair, searching every nook and cranny of the office while she busied herself with the door on the furthest side. She swung it open; it was pitch dark and it shocked her as a business casual corpse lurched towards her, arms outstretched in starvation. She took a heavy step back before hooking the back curve of her Fang against the body's neck, pulling it back with such force that it severed it's head clear off. The body fell still while the head gnawed at nothing on the floor.

"Somebody want to take care of this shit? Or is it on me too?" She snapped at her men; she was at least a decade younger than them but they acted like five year olds. Removing a flashlight from her belt, she cast it around the room, finding paydirt; a row of vending machines.

"We feast tonight, fellas!!"

They really had found a treasure trove; however the corpse inside had died, it had never thought to break the glass and eat while it was alive. Candy bars, potato chips and bags of trail mix tumbled from the machine as the boys stocked up on long untouched bottles of water from the soda machine. As they sat at their camp that night, sharing the spoils of their (mostly her) hard work, she found herself staring up at the sky as the boys laughed and talked amongst themselves. Clear nights weren't a luxury anymore, and she could see the stars for miles; if there was one benefit to the end of civilization, this was it. What she wouldn't give for a quiet field or roof, a blanket and time enough to enjoy them.
"Y'alright Delle?" She was pulled from her trance as Harold spoke to her; his scruff messy with crumbs.

"I'm fine, Harry; don't eat your whole share in one go, make it last." She instructed, having limited herself to half a bag of trail mix for the next two days. Food was no easy item to find, so when she did she was careful with it.

"Sorry, chief," he mumbled, crinkling the now empty chip bag into a ball. The other two men chided him for being told off by a girl, but both knew well to follow her order. It'd kept them safe so far.

Her one rule was they let her sleep; which meant the three of them moved in rotation on the nightly guard. She hadn't slept soundly since the dead had started walking around, but it didn't keep her from trying. She shook out her hair from the knot she wore it in atop her head, losing only her outer most layer for comfort; leather had never been comfortable to sleep in. She laid back against the roots of a tree, shutting her eyes as the embers glowed soft before her.

She dreamed; the apocalypse hadn't taken that from her either. In her mind, it was still before; electricity and clean water still flowed, the dead stayed dead, and she was still laughing. He always made her laugh in her dreams, charming and cajoling her as he had done then; though in her fantasies the ring was gone, and he was hers. She could practically taste the whiskey and smell his sweat as the illusion began to ramp up...

But there was pain; pain and sudden movement. Her eyes snapped wide as she felt an iron grip on her hair, dragging her body off through the treeline; headlights dancing through the columns. Her body invigorated with adrenaline, she kicked and grabbed at the arm that held her; in the darkness, whoever it was seemed to pay no mind to it, simply forcing her along the forest floor.

"Get off me you dickless prick!" She roared, digging her nails into her captor's flesh. It earned a glance down, cold eyes peering through gold eyebrows. He said nothing but gave a firm tug, making her neck ache. She needed to get with the program. When they reached the headlights she immediately saw her threw idiots kneeling and shivering; Marco bore a large gash on his forehead and a steadily growing bruise.

"Fucking REALLY, guys!?!" She shrieked as her hands were roped tight at her back, forced into the same cowering pose. "You had ONE JOB! One fucking job and I couldn't even rely on you to do that!?!" She grunted as the butt of a rifle smacked her head, earning a sharp glare from her to its owner.

"Do that again, see what happens, you dick wad." She growled, daring the man behind her to test her anger. He seemed like he was about to do it before a deep laughter erupted in front of her.

"Wow would you listen to that mouth!?!" Her eyes squinted to see a tall, thin figure back lit by the high beams, applauding as he walked towards her. He crouched to meet at eye level, dark receding hair and a 70s styled mustache framing his grin. His eyes were lively and excited. "That's no way for a lady to talk!" He clicked his tongue, grasping her chin in his hand.

"I'm no lady; can't you see the big ass dick in my pants?" Her response dripped with venom, but he still laughed away her comments.

"Aren't you a charmer?!" He marvelled, patting her cheek. In another time she might've taken the action as an invitation to go home with him, but now, at the mercy of his men, it just made her mad. "You're definitely gonna be a good time."

"Fuck you, gramps!" She ground her teeth together, suddenly glimpsing the outline of her machete,
her Fang in another man's hand; the rage she felt redirect to his thief. "HEY!"

The sound that left her lips barely sounded human as she attempted to crawl to her weapon, only to be held back by the moustached questioner. "You give my Fang back right now! I swear I'll rip balls out through your toes if you get a scratch on 'im!!"

The interrogator threw his gaze between the blade and the woman before him; she was wild and roaring, like a freshly caught tiger. His boss would be pleased with this catch - how rare was it to find another living being who's weapon had a name? With a sharp tug she was back on her knees, eyes seething at him.

"Now don't get your knickers in a knot, gorgeous; I've got good news for ya," he chuckled, standing back at his full height. "As a reward for finding so much good shit for us," he gestured to their rucksacks, piled up along with their weapons. "One of you lucky fucks is gonna get to come back to Sanctuary with us!" He clapped his hands together before casting his near black eyes back down at her. "And I am making a command decision that you are that lucky woman!" He thrust a finger into her face, giving his boys the nod to haul her up.

"Just kill the others; they don't look worth the effort," the man waved a hand as he turned to leave.

"Wait!" She protested, struggling in the grasp of her escort. The man's shoulders sagged in annoyance, turning as his mouth pouting, irked.

"Look princess, I'm really in no mood for some heartfelt plea for their measly lives, so if we could just--"

"Can I do Marco?" She asked, biting at her lip. To sate his confusion, she continued. "It seems like if he'd been doing his job I wouldn't be in this mess."

He smiled with his shockingly white teeth again, shaking his head. "You're fucking twisted, ain't cha?"

She tilted her head down and fluttered her lashes. "C'mon; let a girl have some fun." She breathed, watching him mull her request. He stroked his chin thoughtfully before giving a nod to undo her cuffs. She stepped forward, gesturing towards her weapon as she closed the gap between herself and her hapless companion. Her now lenient captor waved the okay to hand her the machete, guns trained on her in case she did something stupid.

"P-please, Delle don't do this..." Marco whimpered as her fingers grasped her blade.

"Shut up, Marco," she hissed. "You got me into this; least you could do is take it like a man." She spun her Fang in her hand, watching carefully as he closed his eyes and accepted his fate. With that sign of surrender she raised her weapon, bringing it down with as hard and fast as she could.

Marco's skull separated diagonally from the rest of his body; slumping into a bloody pile at her feet. She breathed deeply as the pack of men shared looks of disbelief, confusion and some appreciation. She felt heat at her back, the leader's voice in her ear.

"What did he say your name was?"

"Delle."

"I'm Simon. You're gonna fit in real nice."
Chapter 2

She watched intently as the crew who'd caught her gently wrapped her Fang in its sheath; she couldn't recall the last time she'd put him away, and definitely not when she last let someone else touch him. Her skin crawled at the sight, but as her wrists were bound again, there was little she could do.

"Let's get this show on the road, men!" Their apparent boss, Simon, hoisted her up into the back of his own pick up, nestling her in with a guard and supplies. The night had grown cold as the engine of revved, leading the convoy from the now three executed men. The stars whizzed by overhead, giving her time to contemplate her new 'friends'.

She was grateful she'd had the chance to express her strength in front of them; not so much physically, but the strength to take action where it's due. Marco had fucked up, and required punishment. She was angry, yes; but she understood the need.

She was caught off guard as the back window of the truck slid open, Simon's dark eyes peering at her from his mirror. "So, where you from, Delle?"

"Grew up a town or two over; did some travelling at first but always found my way home." She responded with a little nod.

"That right?" He asked, those teeth shining from his reflection. "Well Miss Delle, we've got some surprises in store for you."

"Fun," she said sarcastically, staring daggers through her guard. "If you're gonna rape me, could you at least kill me first? I'm sure I'll still feel the same."

"Nah, we don't rape. It's against our code of conduct," that was a small relief in her existence. "No, a little lady with your talents, you're made to be a Savior."

"A what?"

"Sa-vi-or," he replied, enunciating the word and tapping at his ear. "We go round these parts, find resources... and we save people. Just like you."

"Like me? I didn't need saving. I was doing fine and fuckin' dandy." Her stare found his in the mirror.

"Were you? Babysitting 400 pounds of dead weight that couldn't even guard right?" His eyebrow arched and she conceded his point; those three had been slowing her down. "You'll find yourself far more comfortable at your new home. Good people, strong; nobody fucks with us."

"Sounds like a blast," she let her head ret against the back of the cab, eyes drilling into the back of Simon's head. "So long as I bend the knee to you, right? Mr boss man, Simon fuckin' says?"

He chuckled, turning the steering wheel for a new road. "I'll be using that one. I'm just middle management, sweetheart; you'll meet the big bad tomorrow night. Will take some time to get you back there and we've got a few stops to make."
Delle woke to the sound of a hand against metal; the Saviors had come to a stop just outside a large set of gates that overlooked a wide expanse of fields. She glanced over her shoulder with bleary eyes at Simon's smiling face, arms slung over the edge of the flat bed.

"Morning, princess," he gave her a nod, knocking his fingers against the vehicle. "First stop; hill top. Nice folks here; farmers," he gave her a stern look, taking her face in his palm. "Now I need my boys in with me, girlie; can I trust you'll be good and still til we're done?"

"Yes," she replied confidently; she had no plans on dying that morning, or for some time yet. Out of the corner of her eye she spotted a corpse lunging forward for her captor, a hungry look in its dead eyes. "Behind you!"

As if on cue a bullet went through the body's skull, laying it out flat. She looked over to the second car behind them to see that an underling and put it down. Simon smiled at her again, his hand pressing to his chest.

"We've got shit handled, sweetheart; but I appreciate your concern." For good measure he had her ankles bound together as well, sturdy knots holding her in place as the gates opened to allow them entry. The inner walls were like nothing she'd seen since the world had ended; people walked around freely, if a little tense at their arrival. She could see gardens along the fence, there were even a few children. People weren't surviving here, they were living. She sat quietly as Simon and his men gathered together, met by a bearded man with long hair and defiant gaze.

"Fine morning, eh Jesus?" She heard Simon say; she wondered if it was a nickname or given. "Gregory up at the house?" The man called Jesus gave a tight nod as the Saviors pushed on towards the mansion that sat overlooking the small community.

"Amazing," she declared, twisting her head to see rows on rows of trailers, packed in to the safety of the grounds. "Fucking amazing."

The sun was high in the sky when Simon and his band finally exited the building, a squirrely looking old man in tow. They carried with them a few boxes as their boss exchanged words with the older fellow, leading to him dropping to one knee. What kind of power did he wield, and if he was a middleman, what could his boss do?

Simon spun his arm in the air as he made his way back to the vehicles; his minions fanned out towards the trailers, clearly another part of their visit not yet complete.

"This is incredible." She mumbled as he wandered back into earshot, calling his attention. He ambled over and rested his arms against the truck again, his palm cradling his head.

"What's that, sweetheart?"

"This is... this is people. People have lives here," she elaborated, her eyes falling on her warden. "I've never seen anything like it. Not since before."

He gave a funny little grin and chuckled. "If you like this you won't believe Sanctuary; makes this place look like a pit," his eyes scanned her face and body. "You know you are beautiful, Miss twisted. I'd have you for myself but I'm pretty sure the boss will want to wife you first."

She pulled her head back, perplexed. "Wife?"

"Yep; big bad's in the habit of collecting wives now. I think you'd be number... five? I think five."
"Well that's fucking peachy for him and his dick, but I'm not the marrying kind," she replied, scrunching up her nose. "Particularly to married men." A sour feeling found her stomach, recalling a time when that hadn't been true.

Simon shrugged, pushing himself back up. "We'll see what you say when he asks. He's a persuasive man."

"Still gonna be no!" She called to him as he slid into the driver's seat of the pick up, observing as the Saviors reappeared; almost all of them carrying some box of fruit or vegetable while one - seemingly in charge of inventory - checked produce off a list. They'd even created some kind of economy; this boss must've been a god.

Chapter End Notes

We've got a ways to go before we meet the man; hope ya'll don't mind some Simon in the meantime ;)
Before...

He'd taught her in her freshman gym class; that was usually when most girls developed their little crushes on him, whistle round his neck and barking orders. But not her. She was ornery, would argue back when he'd pull her from touch football for tackling another prepubescent girl. Even at 14 she had a mouth on her, favoring 'fucking geezer' instead of 'Coach Negan' as everyone else did. He was fairly certain she hated him, but she was just adorable; a tiny firecracker, snapping and popping at any chance she got.

Delle was strong, and enjoyed sports, but wasn't for the babying and safety rules the school put in place for their 'protection'. She'd heard that Negan had got in trouble for breaking said rules in the past, and she guessed that was why he was such a stickler now - but that didn't mean she had to like it. She was a full contact, no pads little fighter, and though it alienated her classmates, she liked who she was. She just managed to pass Negan's class, if for the express purpose of him not having to teach her - or reign her in - again.

"Congratulations Delle; this is the last you'll have to deal with me." Negan said on the final day of class, signing off on her grades. 'And the last I'll have to deal with you.'

"Thanks, you fucking geezer." She grinned as she snatched up her report.

"Language."

"Oh C'mon, it's the last day. Loosen up, teach." She shrugged, sliding the paper into her knapsack. He shook his head and rubbed a hand over his face, an exasperated expression crossing it.

"You're a fuckin' handful, you know that?" He asked; she felt a little pleasure hearing him swear; seemed Coach Negan could bend the rules sometimes.

"Yup; and in three years you'll get my brother, too!" She laughed as his brows furrowed, imagining another version of her in his class. Without warning she stuck her hand across the desk at him. "It's been fun, Coach."

He glanced at her hand out to him before shaking it; she was tiny in his hand, still barely a teenager. "It's been...something."

"Hey geezer, before I go," she rummaged through her bag, her last day notes and books fidgeting around. "$ would you sign my yearbook?"
He laughed this time, flashing her the most real smile he'd given her all year. "Alright, kid. Hand it over." He grabbed a felt tip from his desk, uncapping it with his teeth as he scrawled a message in the book she'd produced. He snapped it shut and handed it back to her, a lopsided grin on her face.

"I'll see you around, Coach Negan." With that she was gone, up the stairs that lead to the rest of the school. He wasn't sure he'd ever heard her call him that.

As she walked through the hallways, teary eyed kids bidding goodbyes to each other and miscreants throwing long forgotten papers to the floor, she read her gym teachers message:

You're a little shit,
Don't lose that fire in your belly
You'll do great things.

-old fucking geezer

She laughed to herself and imagined she would miss the class; or at the very least, miss him.

He barely thought of that little shit Delle Cornish in the years that followed. Every so often he'd hear her name in passing in the teacher's lounge:

"Delle got in a fight again; sent the boy home with a goose egg the size of Texas,"

"I've got Delle in detention all week; told me to shove the proletariat up my ass and suck the Leninist movement's dick,"

"Delle was scrapping with some kids behind the school again; I swear that kid started a fight club,"

"I can't believe Delle Cornish is actually graduating!"

All Negan could think of was the next year, when her foretold brother would join the student body; what fresh terror would the boy Cornish bring?

Delle never really fit in anywhere. High school was just the same; boys who thought they were tougher than her, girls who made up lies, teachers who's rules made no sense. She pulled in decent grades but was kept on detention almost every week; none of the faculty had a sense of humor.

Well, not like the Coach.

She'd think about those gym classes now and then, the way he'd smile when she got up to her usual antics; he didn't seem to mind her mouth, maybe he even found her entertaining. She'd find herself grinning over memories of herself with scrapes on her knees, bloody nosed and her Coach hauling her to his office for a first aid kit; he'd scolded her for fighting, but he saw the strength in her. Yeah he had a soft spot for her; and she for him.

Softer than she wanted to admit.

'She was wrong.' Negan thought to himself, as he pulled hurdles from the gym storage room. He'd had to come in early to set up for track qualifiers that day, the sun barely up yet. His wife was still asleep in their bed when he'd left; hadn't even stirred when he wished her a good day.

One of the athletes competing that day was Eric Cornish; he was a cinch to ace it, becoming
something of a track legend in the one year he'd been at the school. He was fast, agile and strong; just like his sister. But unlike her, he respected his coach. He was proud of his star athlete, and wondered how one family could've produced such vastly different people.

With all the hurdles hauled from storage, he paused to mop the sweat from his brow, regarding the field; it was ringed with a track, wider than you'd find at your average school. As the sun rose past the horizon it bathed the grounds in pink and orange lights; and in those hues he caught sight of the runner on the other side of the expanse.

He had to admit, she left him a little mesmerized. Running in a sports bra and leggings showed off a strong, lean form; her dark hair out and flying wild at her back. She was fast, coming up around the turn like lightning; he simply gawked, asking himself why he hadn't seen her before. She must've noticed him too, as he could make out the slightest grin on her face from the distance, becoming clearer and clearer as she cut across the field, using the last bit of track to dash up to him.

She was gorgeous; bright eyes shone out at him from beneath black lashes, soft lips framed her lopsided smile. Sweat beaded across her skin as her chest heaved slightly, her curved hips cocking to one side as she placed a hand on one. Then she opened her mouth.

"I'll be damned! How you doing you fucking geezer!?!"

He blinked at her, taking a moment to put two and two together; that the beautiful dark creature stood before him now was the same aggressive, ill tempered little monster from four years ago.

"Holy shit," he rasped as she stepped towards him, pulling him into a hug. She felt as good as she looked, he noted as his arms embraced her in a quick hello. "Delle?"

"The one and only," she replied with a flourish, pulling back. He'd seen glimpses of her while she was still in school, and must've shook her hand at graduation; but seeing her now was something different. "How ya been, teach? Giving little Eric what for?"

Remembering himself, he cast her an easy smile. "Don't need to; he follows the rules just fine." She laughed at this; it was the same laugh as her younger self, but age had made it deeper, somehow more feminine.

"Yeah that sounds like Eric. Always scared of the big bad coach," She gave a little wink and he felt something stir inside him. 'Stop it.' He told himself. "Listen I'm on my last lap, but it's good to see you."

"Yeah, you too kid," he bit his lips his eyes involuntarily combed her form; she noticed, giving him a wicked grin. "You look good."

"Thanks for noticing. You don't look so bad yourself!" She laughed as she rejoined the track; it didn't take long for her to reach her top speeds again as he savored the last few glimpses of her breasts bouncing before she turned the track.

"Fuck." He breathed, tearing his eyes away to focus on his work; he slid his hands into his pockets as he made his way to his office; his fingers dancing over something cold, metal and circular.

When had he taken off his wedding ring?
Whaddaya think? Feedback always appreciated, comments make me write faster ♡
Her guard was back on her as the sun fell from overhead, the trees and walkers flying by from the inside of the flatbed. Though the days were hot, night came on fast and brought with it a sharp chill. Her hair whipped around her head as she stared across at the armed man, growing increasingly annoyed with the soft rock that hummed from the stereo inside the cab. She jolted as Simon banged his fist against the back window before throwing it open.

"Almost home, gorgeous!" He threw over his shoulder as the trees receded, a massive industrial building coming into view. As the convoy rolled nearer the details of the grounds became clearer; what looked like a moat of corpses, some chained, some spiked, acting as a protective shield around the compound. Layers of chain links acted as barriers, and at the innermost center were equally well armed men, seemingly leaving on their own mission.

"Fuck me, this place is a fortress!" She whistled as a set of guardsmen pulled the first round of gates back, allowing the team of trucks into the safe zone.

"You gotta make the apocalypse work for you!" Simon laughed as he pulled into a line of vehicles, letting the engine die. Her personal guard untied her ankles to have her stand, her legs aching from lack of use as he shuffled her off the truck. Simon waved the man off, taking over her surveillance.

"Now doll, we're gonna bring you through the cells; standard treatment, because we're very equal opportunity here. Now, the boss, he likes to say his piece; so I'm gonna ask you to be on your best fucking behavior," he took a tendril of her hair and twisted it in his fingers. "I'd hate to see you wind up a stain on the concrete."

She swallowed and physically bit her tongue; it wouldn't be the first time her mouth had landed her in trouble. He took hold of her restraints and pushed her through a wide loading dock, long hallways winding down to matching steel doorways, their journey ending at a door numbered 17. Another man appeared, she assumed the key holder of prison, to allow them entry; she sighed in relief as Simon cut her ties. She rubbed her sore wrists as the older man looked at her expectantly.

"This is gonna be a little awkward; we're gonna need you to strip." He tried to put a little strain on his tone, but the way he drew his lips across his teeth spoke to some enjoyment.

"That's not gonna fucking happen." She snarled, her hands curling into fists, her brows knit in his direction. He sighed and took a heavy step towards her, his height and size over her becoming despairingly apparent.

"Sweetheart, let's not make this difficult. Tell ya what; I'm feelin' magnanimous. Take it down to your skivvies and we'll call it square?" She didn't move, her face defiant and stubborn. His face twisted, his lips twitching to reveal bared teeth. "Or I can beat you unconscious and strip you down myself."

She knew he wasn't joking; and though willful, she wasn't stupid. Refusing to break eye contact with
her catcher, she pulled her layers of shirts over her head, kicking off her boots and losing her jeans. The apocalypse had left her with a ratty set of black undergarments, cotton that hugged her form snugly. Simon let out a low whistle, taking in the sight; she was dirty, as most of the folks he found out in the world were, but grime didn't hide her healthy shape.

"Get a good look you old perv?" She hissed through clenched teeth as he collected her clothes.

"Oh yeah," he gave a nod, stroking his chin. "I'll be thinking of you, sweetheart." He left her in the pitch black room, silence filling her ears as her nerves grew raw with worry. Whoever she was to meet was some new demon she'd not encountered in a world full of ghouls; she had never wanted her Fang more than at that instant.

It didn't feel like a long while when two unknown men came to collect her; thankfully with a change of clothes. She slipped on the oversized set of grey sweats, dirt, sweat and spray paint caked on; she wasn't the first to wear the ensemble.

"Come on, lady," the scruffy one of the two grunted, poking her back with his semi automatic as they marched her down a new hallway that lead to a huge room, what seemed to be a processing center in another life. A short line of 6 or 7 other prisoners were also present, knelt and cowering. "On your knees."

Reluctantly she bowed, the cement cold against her legs despite the pants; she kept her head tucked down, her emotions bubbling forth in a mix of self chastisement and fear over what might come next. She wouldn't show it though, no; she was determined to hold up the front that had got her there thus far.

"Alright you sorry fucks," she recognized Simon's voice overhead, walking down the line. She glanced over at the other captives, each looking more scared, starving and nervous than the last. She made note of one who looked even younger than her, maybe not yet an adult. "You lucky bastards are about to meet your salvation; one way or another. Now, if you can prove your worth to the big guy, you might just be made a Savior; if you're a measly little weakling, maybe you work here, or maybe you join the horde," his shadow fell over her, her vision catching the tips of his boots. "Or... we'll see where your talents fit. Now, let's cut the chit chat; and meet your new boss!"

She listened as heavy footsteps clanged against metal, cascading down what sounded like industrial stairs. Her heart near stopped when a husky, all too familiar voice echoing in the chamber.

"Good evening, folks! Welcome to Sanctuary." Her eyes were wide but did not leave the floor, utter disbelief replacing all other feelings. It couldn't be; it couldn't be him. "You fuckers, you are about to join the realest chance at civilization in this whole fucked up to shit world! Congratu-fucking-lations, dicks!" A laugh that had echoed in her ears and mind countless times filled the air as she kept trying to convince herself it wasn't him; she did not survive this long for him to end her. "I cannot imagine how fucking giddy ya'll must be; so I'm gonna go down this line, and I'm expectin' a real sincere goddamn thank you from each and every one of you lousy sacks. I'm feeling mighty charitable tonight, so all you wastes of air...you're gonna get the chance to say my name,"

'No, please don't,' she prayed silently. 'Don't make this real.'
"I'm Negan."

Chapter End Notes

So how'd I do on the big guy? Tell me ♡
He spent a good chunk of time at the local bar these days, whiskey free-flowing as he mulled over his relationship with his wife. Things had been strained; he'd caught himself staring at pretty women on the street, at the grocery store, on his track. He'd taken to only wearing his ring when he was at home; it left him the chance to flirt shamelessly, maybe get a phone number; not that he had the guts to call. He told himself it was all for fun, just something to do; but no matter who he charmed, his thoughts seemed always to float back to Delle.

She hadn't left his mind since she'd ran into him weeks earlier; he couldn't stop thinking about her body, her hair, her smile. Maybe it was just her youth, or the ball busting she so expertly doled out, but she made him feel things he hadn't in ages. He'd see that ass and those tits in his mind when he found his hand wrapped around his length in his morning showers, or see that smile and wink when he was falling asleep. Whatever it was, he had it bad.

"Top me up, Barnes." He tapped at his glass, elbows heavy on the mahogany counter. His knee bounced absentmindedly, regarding the scarce patrons frequenting the establishment. 'Well it is a Wednesday.' He reasoned, running a hand through his near black hair. He was going grey at his temples and was unsure of how he felt about the look.

"Drinking on a school night? Someone should call your mother." He raised his head, familiar bright eyes and dark hair greeting him from behind the bar. Dressed all in black she was already pouring his drink into a fresh glass.

"Damn, Delle; you following me around?" He smiled as she removed the empty glass and replaced it, giving her a wink as he raised it. "You're a goddamn stalker."

"I've got better things to do with my time," she quipped as she cast a green apron around her waist. "I started on here recently."

"Don't you need to be 21 to work the bar?"

"Why yes you do and that's exactly how old I am on my job application," she said in a hushed tone, throwing him a strained look. "So let's keep the real number between you and I; our little secret?"

He swallowed a sip of his order and gave a nod. Her body relaxed a little, as she picked up a towel
to begin cleaning the dirtied glasses the previous employee had neglected to clean.

"So, part time? Working through college?" He prompted; she didn't have much else to do on such a slow evening.

"No college for me, Coach. I work down at Salder's during the day, and this is my evenings," she cast her hand around the room, setting down her task. He knew Salder's; they manufactured a line of candies that were popular in the area. "Living it up."

He raised a brow, his glass at his lips. "You didn't want to get out of this town? You always struck me as a smart kid."

She flashed him a grin before turning to straighten the bottles behind her; he nearly fell off his chair as her skirt rode up, showing off tightly crossed fishnets coating her legs. "Really? Thought I was a little shit." It was a fond memory for her; the handsome, exhausted gym teacher trying to keep up with her antics. By the way he smiled she knew he felt the same.

"That too," he added, pointing a finger at her from his glass. "But you got a good head on your shoulders. Why not find something to study?"

She pricked at his prompts; she knew very well that she couldn't up and leave. Her mother long dead and her father next to useless, she spent her time working to ensure her and Eric's well being; but she wasn't about to be some charity case in his eyes.

"Enough about me," she spoke playfully, flicking her rag at her former teacher. "Isn't the barkeep supposed to be the therapist? What has you in here on a Wednesday?"

His eyes fell for a moment before meeting hers again; the same color as the warm wood of the bar. "Somethin' to do; I like supporting local businesses."

"Well aren't you a peach?" She declared, bending to retrieve an empty palette for clean glasses. "Do all men get so sweet in old age?"

"Guess I'm just the exception to the rule, doll," He allowed a bit more allure into his tone, paying close attention to an added hue of pink in her cheeks. "You know I'm not all that old; they say 40 is the new 30."

"So what does that make you? 80?" Normally barbs like this would put him off; it was a gentle nature and sweetness that had initially attracted him to his wife. But from Delle, he egged her on.

"Better than little miss jailbait." He'd earned a soft giggle with that one, watching as she stacked up fresh glasses onto her tray.

"You're gonna blow my cover you fucking geezer," she purred and leant across the bar, her arms folding in against her breasts in just the right way. "Help a girl out!"

He raised his hands in surrender, apologizing for his comment. If Delle was anything, she was a conversationalist; they spent the evening talking, not just idle chit chat, but anything that crossed their minds. He shared with her things only his beloved Lucille knew, baffled at the looseness of his tongue. He made her laugh, over and over with his own tales from college; though she clammed up whenever he suggested she create her own. As the hours passed and the clock chimed for 2:00, Delle was setting the alarm for the front door as Negan helped to upend chairs onto tables.
They were alone but for a sodden drunk who'd curled himself into a booth; he'd been nursing the same whiskey for an hour, muttering to himself. Negan had noticed Delle prickle whenever she went near him, much less talk to him; not that he could blame her. The lush smelled like he'd been soaked in hard liquor, stringy blond hair going grey and unwashed; he cackled every so often at some unknown joke, making Delle jump whenever he did. She summoned her nerve and made her way to the little alcove, confident hands on her hips.

"Okay big guy, we're closing up," the drunk pretended not to hear her, circling his finger around his glass hypnotically. "Time to find a cozy ditch to sleep this off, huh?"

The man raised his head to Delle; older, dark eyes stared at her, bleary and red from drink. "Awe; C'mon Delle, you can leave me in here. I won't mess with shit, promise..." he slurred, reaching for her arm.

Negan moved to interfere but she simply stepped back, letting the inebriate's head hit the table. "I'd find the place dry as a desert by tomorrow, old man; let's go," she hooked her hands under the man's shoulders, trying to hoist him up from his seat; but he let his body go slack, dead weight too much to lift for her strength. "Fuck, C'mon you bastard!"

No longer keen to let her struggle, Negan stepped from the bar to offer aid; there was a clear gap in their strengths as he heaved the drunk out of the booth, tossing him over his shoulder in a fireman's carry. "Where can I leave this for ya, darlin'?" He gave her an easy smile and swore he saw some color in her cheeks.

"Just as long as he's out of the building, I couldn't give a fuck." She answered, watching as her old coach carried him out onto the street, settling him to his feet as she followed.

"Oh that's just cruel, Delle!" The lush was angry now, his hands balled into fists. "Kickin' me out, getting your goddamn muscle to force me onto the street!" He shook his finger in her face, met only with an uninterested glare. "I could sue you for manhandling me!"

"Right. Let me know when you find a lawyer willing to take your case," she spat back, her brows knit. "Til then, kindly get the fuck out of he--" He cut her off with a hard slap against her face, and Negan saw red.

Before he could register what his body was doing, the drunk was on the ground, clutching his nose which streamed with blood. Negan looked down to see the remnants of a well guided punch on his fist, then back to Delle who only stared at him in shock. "Don't let me see your rotten hide back here," his voice was low and mean, more furious that Delle had ever heard it.

The man, surprisingly nimble, sprang back up, glaring him down. "You asshole! Think you can go roughing me up!? Fuckin' bas--" this time Delle cut him off, tackling him with her full force, sending him down to the ground again. She climbed over him, her knee pressed to his chest as she threw her own fist against his jaw with a hard crack.

"Get the fuck out of here you waste of air!" She screeched; Negan could see a few lights switch on in the apartments across the street. Realizing the futility in the argument, the drunk crawled from her grasp, stumbling his way down the road and muttering curses.

She cast her eyes up towards Negan, seeing something different in him than she'd even known before; his chest was rising and falling with heated anger, his gaze still hard on the drunk as he sulked away. When he cast his eye back to her it softened, and in it she saw worry and concern.
"Hell of a left hook you got there, kid," he smiled softly, glancing at her own bloodied fist. "Wouldn't want to run into you in a dark alley."

"Heh; girl's gotta take care of herself, right?" She grinned up at him, but paused in stillness as his wide, warm hand cupped her cheek; her eyes were wide as he drew his thumb across her bottom lip. 'What the fuck is happening!?' Her inner voice screamed, his eyes trained on her mouth. Only when he pulled back and she saw blood on his digit did she understand.

"Damn; he walloped you good though," he admitted, studying the red liquid on his thumb; a cut had formed in the center of her lip, popped and swelling. "You gonna be alright?"

"It'll take more than a fat lip to take me out, you fucking geezer!" the way she grinned, wide and dazzling, struck him with a feeling he found unfamiliar. She was tough; strong as steel and hard as nails, metal wrapped in her soft body. 'Oh no.' He breathed in quickly as her hand pressed against his shoulder, the other cradling his cheek as her lips brushed its twin. "But thanks for defending my honor."

He gave a nod, running his hand through his hair. She made him feel like a teenager, constantly vying for little tastes of affection or sensation, desperate for her attention. It made him feel like a fool, but in front of her with those big, grateful eyes shining at him; all he wanted was more. "Shit Delle, anytime."

She smiled coyly at her coach before realizing the time; she needed to finish up and head home if she was going to wake up in time for her Salder's shift. "Well, thank you for that, really; I've gotta get this place shut..." she gestured to the bar.

"You want me to stick around?" He asked, leaning against the doorframe as she went to let herself in. "Wouldn't want that prick waitin' around to fuck you up."

"Don't puss out on me now, Negan! I can take care of myself. Get on home, you've got classes tomorrow." She allowed him one more wink as she slipped back into the bar, locking the door behind her; she thought she might jump him if she spent another second under his stare.

Chapter End Notes

Hopefully I didn't paint this in too gushy of a light; don't worry folks, smut soon to follow ;) but commenting will get you to it faster!

♡♡♡
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Delle is a mouthy little shit; as usual.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

She was froze solid as she listened to him tow the line, one by one the other captives praising him, thanking him with every word they knew. He’d chuckle, sometimes respond with a cuss or tease; when he finally stopped before her, she didn't move, her hair a dark curtain around her head.

"Damn Simon, did you find me a new wife?" His voice was still gruff and deep, though there was a coldness in it that she'd never heard before. "Good job, buddy," she felt something hard nudge against her shoulder impatiently. "C'mon darlin', show me that pretty face; I won't bite til you tell me to." He and his men laughed at his joke as she caught sight of the end of a bat wrapped in barbed wire tapping the ground.

With venom in her voice, she weighed her options carefully. If he was going to hurt her, he'd know exactly who she was before he did. "What did you say your name was? Negan?"

His ears picked up on a familiarity in the girl's voice, but he brushed it off. It couldn't be her; instead he whistled, stomping his boot against the concrete. "Mm I like the way you say my name, sugar."

She slowly let her her body rest back on her knees, letting her hair act as a mask around her head as she peered up; it was him, beyond a shadow of a doubt. He was older, his beard more salt than pepper now; grey and white teasing at his temples, but he was as appealing as the first day she'd laid eyes on him. He still wore his cocky smile, his leather jacket; if not for the barbed bat in his hand it would've been as normal as running into him on the street.

She tried to stop it, but as usual her words got away from her; her mouth was going to get her in trouble again. "That's a stupid fucking name; you look like some fucking geezer to me." As she silenced, she let her head tilt back, her mane falling from her face.

He tried not to let the rush of emotion show in his exression, but couldn't help his brows twitching and eyes widening as her face came into view. Her bright eyes and uneven smile taunted him, dared him to act; shock and surprise keeping him from doing so. Of all the women in the end of the world, she showed up in his house with his men.

"Fucking hell!" His right hand man's voice rang out, angry feet pounding the floor as he yanked her up by her hair; he felt a pang in his chest as she yelped in pain. "What did I fucking say, Missy!? I'm sorry boss, this one was a long shot," he moved to drag her off, back to the cells. "I'll deal with her." Negan found his arm shooting out to catch hers; her skin tingling under his touch.

"Hold on, Simon," he let his gaze fall on her, those obstinate eyes staring at him. "I like a woman with some fire in her belly. Take her back to her cell, I'm sure she'll shape up," Simon's grip loosened, her scalp grateful. "Once she learns the rules."

Simon stared at him in confusion, then to her as she let loose loud and long laughter; had any prisoner showed such insubordination, they would've been taken out and made part of the dead
garden in minutes. What made her so different?

"...alright." He eventually grumbled, a hand on the small of her back to direct her back to
imprisonment. He often questioned his leader's motives, but wouldn't do so publicly. He didn't need
another Oceanside debacle.

"I'll see you in a week, you little shit!" Negan's voice filled her ears as she stumbled away, the only
prisoner being sent back to their cell. "Maybe you'll play nice by then!"

"A week?" She promoted Simon for more information as they trudged back to her new home; his
face was angry but he was trying to suppress it. "Just for that?"

"Consider yourself blessed, sweetheart," there was a stormy quality in his tone. "He's done far worse
for far less."

She dwelled on his face; his smile was still the same, wide and dimpled, still gorgeous with the added
years. There was a stoic look in his eye though; like a flame in him had been extinguished. "Has he...
did he build all this himself?"

"Took some time, but yes," Simon was surprisingly charitable with information. "He's got a system
and it works; it keeps people safe," he spun her to face him as they stopped before room 17. "But
you've got to follow the rules. What the hell was that, running your goddamn mouth?"

Her eyes dropped, not willing to share their past with his lieutenant; she didn't know the extent to
which his past might hurt him. "$I... I don't know. I'm just kind of a smart ass."

He sighed and rubbed a hand across his hair. "$You got that right," the watchman joined the pair,
allowing them into her cell. He waited and watched her lose the grey sweats again, chewing at the
inside of his cheek. "$Smarten up, little miss Delle. Would hate to see that pretty mouth get you hurt."

"Wouldn't be the first time." she gave him a little wink. He gave a hard look and shook his head
before leaving her again in darkness. Finally alone, the floodgates opened and she collapsed under
the weight of the situation.

____________________________________

It's incredibly hard to tell time in a silent, black cell; at first you try counting the seconds, trying to
organize them into minutes in your mind. You do alright the first hour, but eventually you start
second guessing your count; was that one hour or two? Did I skip a few numbers? And when sleep
finally hits, there's no telling how long it's been.

This was the status Delle was in; bathed in darkness, nothing but the muffled sounds of voices and
footsteps outside her locked door. The sound of her own breath was beginning to drive her mad
when the lock finally clicked, light cascading past a now familiar, tall stature.

"Hey twisted sister," Simon slipped down to his haunches, resting heavy arms on his knees. She was
laid out on her back, legs bent at her knees, peering up at him through her mane of hair. "$How's your
stay? Enjoying the amenities?"

Her time alone hadn't softened her jabs. "$Five fucking stars, bean pole; where's the scotch I
ordered?” She tried to push herself up, finding herself surprisingly weak.

"Heh, that mouth is gonna get you in a world of trouble," he smiled through his whiskers, watching her struggle. "Figured I ought to feed you before I forget you're down here." He reached into the hallway, retrieving a steel bowl; her eyes focused on the miniscule brown discs that filled it. Dog food.

"Eat up, girlie; this is as good a--" He stopped short as she sank her head into the bowl, her jaw grinding and gnashing against the hard, stale kibble. Most prisoners at least whimpered or moaned a the prospect of eating dog chow; she seemed to savor it. "...well shit."

She leaned her head to look up at him, tossing her hair aside. "What?"

"Never seen anyone go to town on dog food like it was steak."

"I guess most people you bring here haven't really starved, then," she licked her lips clear of crumbs. "Though I prefer cat food; especially chicken. You got any of that?"

There was some strange charm in this crass little fighter, he couldn't help but admit it. The way she blinked at him, waiting for his response on the cat food, couldn't help but tickle his humor.

"You're a fucking bruiser aren't you?" He wondered, letting his cheek fall against his fist.

"Do I look like I got this far sitting on my ass and waiting to be saved?" She raised a brow and tossed him a sceptic look. He shrugged and shook his head; she had a point. Her body was strong, despite the severe lack of food since the world had ended she had fought tooth and nail to stay alive; all with her Fang in her hand. Even now she didn't feel whole without him.

"Have to give you that one, little psycho," he reached down and swept up a handful of her hair, drawing her up and drawing a squeal. "Now listen, kid; you're tough as shit and a little bad ass. But if you don't fall in line, you're gonna wind up on that fence outside," he let his eyes trail across her barely clothed body before returning to her face. "And it would just break my heart to see those tits rotting off your chest."

Her lip curled in a grimace; she hated the loss of control, the imprisonment, the fact that high above it all stood Negan, happy as a goddamn clam. His right hand man, with his chocolate eyes and strong hands, was being suspiciously altruistic regardless of his tactless phrasing. Behind the desire there was honest concern.

"...so what do I have to do?" She said through clenched teeth, her scalp burning from the tension.

His face relaxed a tad, seeing in her the unwillingness to relinquish her power, but the begrudging respect to do so. "That's better," he released her hair and patted her cheek. "You've got three more days in here, Delle; when that's up, I've got orders to bring you up to Negan directly," a chill went down her spine, hearing his name. It still felt like some nightmare. "If you want to keep that pretty mouth breathing, you're gonna be real goddamn amenable to whatever the fuck he says."

She swallowed near non existent spit, surpressing the fury bubbling in her stomach; she couldn't believe she was under him again, with even less power than before - but that didn't mean none at all. "Fine... but can you something for me?"

"And what's that, Miss twisted?"
"Don't dress me before you take me to him."

He couldn't help a belly laugh at her request; but far be it from him to cover that body. "You know what, you got a deal you little freak," He stood back to his full height, stretching his back, unabashed about the half hearted erection in his jeans. "See you in a few, Delle. Don't eat all your chow in one go."

Before he turned he felt her hand twist around his ankle, pulling his attention back down to her; the look on her face was sweeter, appreciative. He could almost see a genuine smile tugging at her lips.

"Thanks Simon; really." The darkness was back again; and she began to count. She had something to look forward to.

Chapter End Notes

Delle what're you doing :O comments make me update ♥♥♥
**Chapter 7**

Chapter Notes

Ohhh they gone and done it now...

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

**Before...**

His nights of late almost always ended at the old pub, his mood almost immediately brightening when he'd see that smile and that ass behind the bar. Even on busy weekends she'd have a sharp word or playful jab for him as she poured his drinks; and so often did he shut the place down with her, squeezing the last few minutes of his time with her dry for any drop of her attentions.

Tonight, however, his mood was irregularly grouchy; he'd got in something of a fight with Lucille that morning, if he could call it that. He was sick of her questions, asking why he was so late almost every night; mind you, there isn't any right way to tell one's wife about a crush on a teenage bartender. He'd wondered with bitterness why she wanted him home early in the first place; the last weeks she'd been ignoring him, sometimes hardly recognizing when he was talking. He hated it; and as their shouting match came to a close, he ran off to Delle. He needed a drink.

She was rubbing down the counter when he came in; he'd become a fixture at the bar, much to her glee. She was almost always enthused to see him, a worthy opponent to throw barbs and quips back and forth with all night. It didn't hurt that the soft spot for him in her had grown with each visit, that distance between them getting shorter and shorter when they'd finally say good night. A part of her wished he'd say something, do something - her, for example - but her morals told her to reject the feeling, worried her attraction might land him in hot water. She couldn't be the one who destroyed her brother's athletics mentor; so she bit her tongue, simply smiling at him as he sidled up to his usual stool, raising 4 fingers rather than his usual 2. Must've been a rough day.

"Hey there, gramps," she teased as she poured him a double of his usual. "Young'uns run you ragged today?" She took a moment with him as he took a long gulp of his drink, setting it on the flimsy cardboard coaster she doled out.

"Not at all; classes have been fine ever since you fucked off, Delle," he felt a smile tugging at his lips; he let his gaze trail down a particularly low cut top he was sure he hadn't seen her in before. "Just a tough fuckin' day."

She gave him a sympathetic smirk, taking a quick glance around her workplace; only a few people left in booths, another man at the bar. He'd come in late, and it allowed her to spend a little extra time with him. "You want to talk about it?"

He let the smile find his face, grateful for what seemed like genuine sympathy. "Nothing to worry your pretty little head about, little miss. Grown up stuff." He downed the dregs of his glass, pleased
to find another ready to go; she already knew him so well.

"I'm just as grown up as you, you fucking geezer," she jabbed a finger in his direction, sliding down the bar to freshen the other patrons glasses before she slipped back to him. "Some folks say I'm wise beyond my years, whatever the fuck that means."

"You? Right... really though. Y'don't need to hear any bitching from an old man like me."

She shrugged, busying her hands with the drying of a glass. "I don't mind it... you're my preferred company anyway."

He was shaken to hear such candor from Delle; he'd never seen her so exposed, and it was his new favorite look on her. She bit her lip, nervous that she'd let too much slip as he swirled the liquor in his drink before meeting her eyes again.

"You ever... you ever find yourself thinkin' why you even bother?" He spoke slowly, his demons carefully selecting his words without him blurring anything out. "Like you keep at what you're doin', but you haven't got the foggiest fuckin' idea why?"

She reached across the polished countertop and squeezed his hand. "All the fucking time."

"How the fuck do you keep doin' it then?"

"I figure... there's gonna come one of two days. Maybe one day I'm happy, in a better place, glad I kept grinding out my way," she rolled her eyes. "Or I'm dead in a ditch somewhere and I can think of how good I had it without even knowing it."

He chuckled; the little beast had a way of brightening up her dark humor in the most endearing fashion. "Good advice, kid. Might just cut it in this business after all."

"Thanks, pops."

"Could do with a fresh drink though; this one up and disappeared!"

Again they spent the night talking, hashing out feelings without relaying anything about their private lives; though as Negan kept up with his glasses it was proving more difficult. It proved another late night, as by 2:00 he was doing his usual hobby of hoisting up chairs and stools as she shut down the business end of things. He couldn't stop stealing little peaks and glanced whenever he could; those now trademark fishnets coating her legs, the toss of her hair, how her chest would rise and fall when adjusting the liquor selection. He felt like a wolf, just an inch away from a hen, waiting to dare to bite.

"You don't need to be doing that, Coach," she said, noticing a slight wobble in his long legs. "I can get this done myself."

"It'd be un-fucking-gentlemanly of me not to." He stated, finding his way back to the bar and finishing his last drink; he'd racked up more than he had intended for the evening. She noted how he unabashedly watched her legs sway towards him as she took up the neighboring stool, reaching for the whiskey bottle he'd been working on all night.

"Then I appreciate it," she smiled, selecting a fresh glass and pouring them each a drink. She took it
down quickly, as she often did with her liquor. "Not enough gentlemen in the world."

"And it's a goddamn shame there aren't!" His wide hand smacked the wooden counter; had his fingers always been so long? "You, little miss Delle, you deserve a gentleman; somebody to treat you like a fucking queen."

She smiled sympathetically at his sailor's mouth and drunkenness; she'd been in his place more than a few times. She offered a gentle pat on his shoulder, registering how warm his skin felt beneath his leathers. "Well if you know any, send them my way."

She found herself going stock still as his hands fell to her knees, hot and nimble fingers stroking the flesh underneath her stockings. "If it were me, I'd treat you like goddamn royalty... show you how a real man handles a woman..." His eyes were glued to his hands, drawing circles across her skin; his tongue brushing across his lip as his eyes seemed to glaze over.

"N-Negan..." she breathed, breaking his trance and drawing his attention to her face. There was a worry behind it, a little fear; but her dilated pupils spoke to excitement. Realizing his position he yanked his hands away, turning his face in shame; despite his flirting he had never outright touched another woman, certainly not so blatantly.

"Shit, 'm sorry Delle... I don't know what that fuckin' was."

"I-Its okay; I probably over served you anyway." She whisked away the empty glasses, tidying up before grabbing her belongings from under the bar. "Come on, old man; let's get you a cab." As he stood he stumbled, and her knee-jerk reaction was to support him, wrapping an arm around his broad back as she placed his round her shoulder.

"S-sorry, darlin', I swear I hold my liquor better than this," he hummed against her as she made a mental map of how he felt up against her side, guiding him from the bar, a steel door letting out into a back alley. She carefully let him go from her grasp, letting him sway softly as she locked up behind them; only to feel a sudden pressure behind her, warm hands on her hips and a beard against her neck.

"Negan...whatcha doin'?" She asked softly, her better angels screaming at her deaf ears to push him away.

He growled low against her neck, causing an intense shiver to shoot through her spine; his lips were hot on her skin, hands steadily climbing up her sides. "You've been on my mind for goddamn weeks, Delle; you're all I fuckin' think about," she gasped as she felt a hardness shoving against her ass; an undeniable desire building in her belly. "I want you so fucking bad."

"I-I think maybe you're just drunk, Coach," she gathered herself to turn; his face was dark with hunger, eyes glassy and pupils so wide they seemed black. "Let's call you that cab? Get you ho--"

He'd heard enough, his mouth crashing against hers in a fiery, frenzied kiss. His hands held her head in a fear she might pull away, smack him; only to be shocked when she kissed him as fervently, gripping at his jacket while her tongue slid between his greedy lips. She surprised him further when she groaned against him, pressing her body tight to his; he responded by closing the gap between her back and the wall, hoisting her legs up as she wrapped them round his waist.

"Holy fuck Coach," she gasped, breaking for air as his mouth dragged across her neck, hard and delicious bites crossing her flesh. He barely heard her, obsessed and needy as his fingers slid
between them, tearing wide holes in her fishnets, again pleased to find her moist and wanting him too.

"You want this too?" He hummed against her, one hand supporting her backside as he pulled her knickers aside, digits dancing up and down her slit.

"F-fuck yes, Negan," she moaned as his fingers curled inside her, eager to increase the flood. "God would you just fuck me already?" He pulled back just enough to throw her a wicked smile, his thumb grinding into her clit to ready her a little further; though she didn't need much. Between pants and whines he unzipped his denim, reaching into his boxers to free his length; hard as steel and thick against her folds.

"Come on you fucking geezer, show me what you go--aahh!" She near shrieked as he filled her,partnered over and over; she was constricting around his sex like a vice, and he reveled in the sounds he pulled from her, his name whispered in succession with breathy gasps. The noises of their sins echoed off the deserted alleyway, a mixture of grunts, whimpers and curses. "This what you wanted all night, doll? Me filling up this sweet little pussy? Huh?"

"Y-yes fuck, harder!!" She pleaded, his body invigorated with a recklessness he hadn't felt since he was her age. He gladly obliged, digging his fingers into her ample ass while he felt her growing tighter, his dick swelling within her cunt. "God Negan don't stop, there!!" Her back was arched against him, a silent voice in his head assuring him this would be the first time, not the only time, this happened.

"Yeah that's right darlin', I got what you need," he panted, his hair tussling as her fingers combed through it, his dark eyes meeting hers, delighting in the sheer ecstasy he found in her expression. Her pussy pulsed around him, matching with his cock while she begged for more, now entranced by her face. Her eyes fluttered a moment, almost shutting as he brought his hand back and smacked at her ass, hitting her thigh. "You fucking look at me, Delle; look at me when you come."

He was right; she was close to her climax, body shuddering and falling apart to his actions. There, in the alley, she stared with half lidded eyes into his expectant face, screaming his name as his own eyes widened, a deep groan leaving his lips as his own release slipped from his control, sticky white ropes of cum coating her walls.

There was a long silence in the air as he held her there, suspended; still buried to the hilt within her, his senses finally registering what he'd done. She was breathing hard against his ear, her hands resting at his shoulders, worried by his stillness.

"Y-you can put me down now," she mumbled against his skin; slowly he pulled his hips back, his softening dick sliding free and coated in the mess he'd made. On shaky legs she tugged at her skirt, trying to mask the holes he'd torn as well as she could; but to little success. She looked up at him, his face an unknowable twist of emotions; she had the strongest feeling she shouldn't be there anymore.

"Um... I'm going to go... I'll see you around, Coach." She retrieved her bag from the ground and began to make her way to the street, admonishing herself for succumbing to her feelings so wantonly.

"Delle," she heard her name called softly from his lips. She turned to look back, his clothes restored
in proper order; somehow he looked even more appetizing after sex than during. "Come see me after school tomorrow."

It was a demand, not a request; but she found herself nodding before taking her leave. It left Negan alone, his mind a wild concoction of thoughts and feelings.

'You fucked her!

'She's so fucking hot!

'Why do you feel like this?

'You cheated.'

'She was so goddamn tight!

'She smells so good.'

'You cheated.'

'What are you gonna do to her tomorrow?'

'Why can't you say no to her?'

'She's half your age you dog!

'You cheated.'

'What if she wants more?'

'You came inside her you dumb fuck!'

'You cheated.'

'You cheated.'

'You cheated.'

'I've got to see her again."

Chapter End Notes

So here we go! Comments make me update loves ♡♡♡
Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

Delle's making friends!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Delle's dreams had changed since she'd been brought to Sanctuary; what had once been memories she clung to, always so resistant to give them up to morning, had been replaced with dark imaginations of what Negan was going to do with her. He'd sent her into utter darkness for a week without batting an eye; had even laughed while doing it. She was certain he knew her, of that there was no doubt; what she did doubt was whether their past would keep her safe. So much had happened since she'd last set eyes on him; how they'd parted ways, how the apocalypse had plunged the world into death. Her blood ran cold when she thought of who else might've survived thus far; she'd understand if she was only being kept alive so 'she' could kill her; in some way she'd accept it, knowing full well she deserved penance for what she'd done. Maybe it was all a game; to break her mind before he broke her body; used that gory bat to splatter her across the pavement.

"He doesn't remember me that well then." She stated to the nothingness around her. If she was meant to die, she wouldn't go down easy; at the very least he would look her in the eye when he ended her life, he owed her that much. Remaining in her skivvies was part of her plan. As much as she hated using her assets to manipulate, he'd never been able to resist her like this; although after 7 straight days without so much as deodorant, she wondered if it'd have the same effect.

Again she tried desperately to keep time; but lost it as soon as she succumbed to sleep. He was swinging that ridiculous bat there, walking through dreamy clouds of red, that booming laugh falling on her like rain. She wanted his touch; even at the end of his bat. She was just humiliating herself with her mouth forced impossibly wide around the end of his weapon when her eyelids were struck by light, and the jingle of keys.

"And..." She heard Simon's voice drawing out the word before she blinked sleep away, seeing him hold up his bare wrist as if he wore a watch. "That's seven days on the nose! Good job girlie," he grinned down at the furious woman, rubbing her eyes of fatigue. "Let's get going."

She raised herself on weak legs; she'd staggered out her puppy chow, but even still her strength was low, and sent her stumbling against the lieutenant's chest.

"Whoa easy tiger; let's get ya cleaned up and then we'll talk," he gave her a wink, that annoying smirk proud through his mustache. "Let's get you oriented." He clapped his hand around her shoulder, half supporting her dizzy figure down the hallway while two well armed cronies followed behind.

"W-when do I see Negan?" The stutter in her voice was due more to lack of energy than nerves; at least that's what she told herself.

"Change of plans," he replied, glancing down to the surprise in her face. "Got called out on a run; but a deal's a deal, so you're out of the hole. At least til you land yourself back in it."
She wasn't certain if what she felt was relief or disappointment over their reunion being put on hold. "I can be good." She grumbled, crossing her arms.

"Right, I'll believe that when I see it!" His loud laughter was becoming irritating. The hallways hummed with dull fluorescent light as they trudged along, leading Delle up a short set of stairs to a communal shower. Simon threw a look at his lackeys, who almost instantly supplied a hard bar of soap and a grungy towel. "You could do with a good scrub. Think you've got the energy? I'd be happy to help." He half joked as she took up his offerings.

"I'll be fine, thank you," She furrowed her brow, staring obstinately at her captor. She waited for him to exit the room, but he made no moves. "D'you mind? I don't really jive with being buck ass naked in front of strangers."

He relented, throwing up his hands. "Fine; just so you know, no windows or doors in here besides this one. So don't pull any death defying escapes, little miss." He turned with his back up and the heavy metal door shut behind him.

"Fucking hell..." she sighed, taking a moment to realize her surroundings; she couldn't recall the last time she'd seen a shower, much less a functioning set. Stripping off her ripe clothing, she took tentative steps towards a pair of knobs, twisting slightly and daring to hope...

"Holy motherfucking shit!" She exclaimed as real, steaming hot droplets hit her skin. Her mouth gaped at the sensation of heat cascading over her sore, tired body; she'd truly believed this was a feeling she'd only know in memory.

"Y'alright in there, Delle?" Heavy knocks thudded against the door, opening just a crack. "Can give you a hand if you need it." Simon was incorrigible.

"Just fine on my own, Simon Says!" She barked back, tilting her head as the water soaked her mane, heavy but so soothing. "How the fuck did you guys rig up hot water?"

"You'd be surprised the talents you find out on the road, sweetheart," there was a grin in his voice as the door opened a fraction more; a tiny part of her mind began to care less if he saw her. "Get a move on; only 4 minutes left."

She was quick to follow this rule, much to her dismay; she worked up a sudsy lather with the block of soap, quick to slough off the dirt and grime coating her skin, paying close attention to her nooks and crannies. She just barely finished washing the suds from her hair when Simon cleared his throat.

"Time's up, sweetheart! I better hear those knobs turning before I come twist yours!" She rolled her eyes as she ceased the stream of hot relief, hurriedly wrapping herself in the old towel before he came sauntering back in.

"Squeaky clean?"

"Like a whistle." She puckered her lips and whistled a low note just to send her point home, a soft flutter of lashes winking at him.

"Great. Now I'm not one to force a young lady into her old, dirty, disgusting clothes after she just got back to that baby soft clean stage," he wound his wrist for dramatic effect as his silent minions produced the standard issue grey track suit again. "So why don't you slip into these duds and we'll
get these cleaned... or burned, whichever."

Delle was begrudgingly grateful for the clothes; she found her exterior slipping a bit around the cocky bean pole of a man, he was at least temperate with her. "Thanks Simon." She mumbled, taking the outfit.

"Good god do my ears deceive me?" He curved his hand around his ear, leaning to her height. "Is our little psycho finally playing nice?"

"Get any closer and I'll tear your throat out with my teeth," there she was again, snapping her jaw to excel her point. "Mind if I get changed?"

Instead of leaving the three men simply turned, promising not to peek; Simon was quick to break that though, chancing a turn of his head to catch a glimpse of her bare ass as she stepped into the sweatpants. 'Damn'.

"So where to, Simon Says?" She asked as the sweatshirt settled over her frame, hanging gapped at her neck and long past her hips.

"Like I said, orientation. Gotta find a good fit for you here."

He lead his little group to the same warehouse floor she'd mouth off in, this time littered with other people in similar grey ensembles; like her, each had letters spray painted onto their fronts. She thought she recognized a few faces from her lineup, but couldn't say for sure.

"Listen up, fuck wads!" Simon's bark was mean and loud, taking a few steps up the industrial stair to really tower over the crowd. "Now, we're in need of some laborers today, and I am extremely confident that some sunshine and hardwork is gonna be real appealing to ya'll," a few burly men stepped forward from the sea of grey, eager to put themselves to work. "Glad to see we have a few volunteers! Now; which of you are nerds? We need some good with numbers for inventory." Again, the crowd split, some less powerful looking men raising their hands.

Simon clapped his hands together. "Fantastic! Meatheads to the left, with Jared; geeks to the right with Steve," the divide left a handful of bodies left in the middle of the room, Delle among them. "The rest of you can mind the fence."

The final group was shuffled back the way they came by a pair of nameless guards, a few nudged and shoved by the butts of guns; Delle hadn't budged.

"Delle, seriously," Simon slid his hands over his face in annoyance as he sidled up to her. "You were just starting to get with the program. Do you want to spend another week in your cell?"

"Make me a Savior."

He blinked, crossing his arms. "What?"

She rolled her eyes and mirrored his pose. "Make me a Savior. I'm good, I'm strong; I'll follow your rules. I want to earn my keep here," she stepped closer to him. "The sooner the better."

"Well aren't you a go-getter?" He raised a brow in amusement. "How do I know you're good?"

"I survived out there; lead my own group."
"Your group got caught."

"You've seen me kill!"

"I've seen you slice up a dude on his knees; that's like hitting a tee-ball and wanting a spot in the major leagues." Was every man around here obsessed with baseball?

"Let me prove myself then," she clasped her hands over her chest, giving him a pleading expression. "Give me back my Fang and I'll show you how useful I can be."

Simon huffed, perplexed; whoever this woman was, she wasn't about to take no for an answer. She had looked formidable that first night, her machete in hand and her red leather jacket; maybe her bite was as bad as her bark.

"Fine; but if you think it's up to me whether you join the team, you're real fuckin' turned around. Negan decides all that."

Her clasped hands dropped to her lap; again he had her waiting around for him, without speaking a word. "Okay... and how do I convince him?"

His eyes danced over her body before finding hers. "Well first things first; we are Negan."

"What?"

"We are Negan. All of us; sure we're all our own people, but when you get right down to it, we're all Negan. Just like we're all human. Just like we're all alive," his head tilted as he looked at her seriously through his brows. "Without him, each and every one of us would be walkin' worm food."

She was beginning to understand; this was seeming less like a community and more like a cult. And presiding over all of it was a goddamn gym teacher.

"So when you ask him to become a Savior, he's gonna ask you something right back," He leaned in close, so near she could pick out the little flecks of amber in his cola brown eyes. "Who are you?"

She stood her ground, tilting her head as she got in his face; she was never one to back down. "I'm Negan."

He stepped back; not completely certain of the honesty in her statement. She was clever, that much was clear; but there was an obstinacy in her that seemed to grow the more they tried to tame her. "That'll do, for now. Y'can stay with me til he gets back; no use holing you up in that box again."

She felt some unease at the idea of staying with Simon; though it flowed through her with an undercurrent of intrigue. She was curious how the upper ranks lived.

"Lead on then, Simon Says," she beamed up at him. "If it's not out of turn could I get some real goddamn clothes too? Grey has never been my color."

Chapter End Notes
How're we feeling about the story thus far, folks? Comments keep me going, kudos give me life ♡♡♡
Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

Negan loves a challenge.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Before...

She'd come with the pretense of dropping off a second set of gym clothes for her brother; she knew he had a clean set but it was the best excuse she had to show up at his office. She'd opted for her skirt once more, a buttoned blouse topping it off; it almost looked professional. She didn't know what had her dressing up for him, but she didn't much care; she was looking for a conversation, and this outfit had worked before.

"It's open," she shivered as his deep drawl emenated from the office. She swung the door open, finding him pouring over student records and notes; a set of glasses perched on his nose. When had he got those, she wondered, as his eyes found her, leaning back in his seat. "Delle. You came."

She gave a little shrug and leaned against the door, closing it. "You did ask," her smile was bashful and apprehensive, but it still warmed something inside him to see it. "Figured you might want to discuss what happened."

He ran his tongue over his lips, trying to deny himself a proper look at her. He motioned for the seat in front of his desk which she gingerly took, hands clasped on her crossed knee. "You figured right; I just wanted to..." he trailed off as he got lost in her waiting expression. 'You wanted to tell her you're married, you dumb ass!' The angel on his shoulder screamed to him; while the devil on his other pondered how she'd look naked on his desk. "I... I'm sorry for being such a dick bag. I really don't know what came over me. I hope... I hope you don't feel I took advantage of you."

"Oh, oh no not at all," there was a sweetness in her tone as she laid a comforting hand on his desk; he tried to memorize the shape of her fingers. "Listen Coach, you're a tough guy; but if I didn't want you I would've laid you out cold." Her normal grin had returned, all he could focus on was a select few words: if I didn't want you.

"Heh, well glad to know you're a little ass kicker; thought you might've got soft without me around."

He matched her grin, leaning forward to rest against the desktop.

"Me? Never," she let her lashes flutter a little just to watch his reaction. "I still took care of myself; just without all the rules and regulations. Was never great with those." She earned a little chuckle from him, glad to see he was relaxing.

"You're goddamn right about that," he nodded, watching a little red color her cheeks. She seemed to like it when he cursed; some things hadn't changed. "Now... given your brother is still in school here
"Done and done, teach," she responded confidently. She didn't spend much time with others, and if secrecy meant it might happen again, she was glad to do so. "Won't breathe a word; I'm very discrete..." she paused, considering a line of thought she hadn't yet. "You... you don't think I fucked you to give my brother special treatment, do you?"

"Oh shit of course not!" The little roar in his voice sent off a little shock in her. "He stands on his own strengths; see, I think we did what we did because, er..." Negan wasn't normally the type to lose his words so easily, and he hated that she made him do so; an insubordinate former student, she should've made his blood boil. His body tensed as he saw her stand, leaning across the desk; felt her touch near burn him when her hand fell on his.

"...because we wanted to?" She finished his thought, biting her lip over the chance she'd taken. His eyes seemed darker, hungrier; maybe it was paying off. "I mean, we're both consenting adults... maybe we just wanted to see how it'd feel."

'Barely adults.' His conscience pointed out; she was still incredibly young, yet he couldn't turn her away. Other such young women had offered themselves before who he'd dismissed as schoolyard crushes not yet let go, but even if her attraction to him had been born the same way, he didn't care. His hands gripped at a nearby pen, turning it in his fingers as she waited for his counter.

"Could be," he concluded, letting himself tilt forward just a bit more. "Would give me a reason for wanting your annoying ass." He loved the way she winked at him, how her lashes fluttered around her lively eyes.

"Oh so you want me when you're sober, too?" She asked, the gap between their faces growing smaller. She glanced down when she felt his large hand wrap around her wrist, though his gaze didn't leave her.

"Couldn't tell you why," he muttered, lips just brushing hers; he could feel her skin raise under his fingers. "But yeah... something about you is just goddamn magnetic."

"I know just what you mean." She replied as she let her lips fall flush to his, testing the waters before diving in as he tugged her wrists closer, standing to hoist her to her knees on the desk. His hands wove through her hair, teeth nibbling at her lips as a growl hummed in his throat. She shoved the student records from the surface, curving under him to lie against her back as his wide form engulfed her.

"Shit, Delle," he chuckled, pulling back to look at her. With her hair splayed out in swirls and starving eyes begging for him, she looked like a siren calling him in, for which he would gladly drown. Conscience and logic thrown from the room he took hold of her blouse, tearing it open at the buttons; she'd covered her breasts in a black lacy number that teased their natural shape. "Damn."

"Thanks," she shivered as his experienced fingers pulled away the delicate material, her tits now free and exposed to him; he near drooled over her, taking in the sight. "You look like you've seen God or something."

"Oh I have; I've seen one God," he chuckled as he lowered himself to her right breast, cupping and massaging her sweet curve as his mouth closed around the little pink bud that topped it, tasting her skin and and relishing the sounds she made. "...and two." He chuckled as he did the same to its twin, extracting a sweet whimper from her mouth.
"Mm you're such a cheeseball," she declared with a moan, feeling him roll his hips against her core, hardness pressed urgently to her covered slit. "If you're suddenly so devout, I can think of a third god you can worship."

He loved how her mind worked, so quick and so dirty; he grinned above her as he leaned back on his knees, sliding up her skirt to drag her panties down past her ankles, his wide hands spreading her thighs to take in the sight.

"Goddamn, you little shit," he shuddered, sliding his fingers up her soaked folds, coating them in her velvety juices. "You get all worked up for ol' me?" His grin almost hurt as she had no snide comment to spit at him; instead letting her head roll back in agonizing pleasure. "Oh, I think you did."

"S-so what if I did?" She whispered, defiant eyes on his dark orbs. A snicker rumbled in his throat as he traced circles around the little gem of nerves at the edge of her mound, reddening with excitement by the second. She shook under his touch, her nails digging into the wood of his desk. "Mm... oh don't stop, fuck..."

"Not a fucking chance, darlin'," he growled as his body fell back over hers; his stubble was rough against her neck and shoulders as he kissed, licked and nipped. His hand worked tirelessly, memorizing the pressure and movements that received the greatest reaction, his knees keeping her legs spread as she squirmed. He let his thumb take charge over her clit as his fingers slid down, probing at her entrance before sliding in deep and slow. "Damn; you are tight as fuck, Delle."

"N-Negan," she gasped under him as his digits curved, pressure from outside and in compressing the angelic spot that guaranteed her release. His eyes found hers, watching the snarky, sarcastic exterior melt into a hungry, pleading center; he wondered in the back of his mind how often those walls crumbled, and how often she'd let him do it. His lips found hers briefly, a softer, gentler kiss than before as he applied a little extra pressure. "Oh god more!"

"Don't gotta tell me twice," he replied, letting his free arm circle around her head, dark strands cascading across it as he pulled her flush to his lips, her arms curving up to hold his back as her climax drew closer. He chanced a third finger, her body tensing then shuddering under all three stroking at different rhythms. She broke from his kiss to allow a long, soft moan from her throat, eyes so clouded and pupils so wide he could barely see the color surrounding them. "You're gonna come for me."

Again, it was an order, not a request; one she couldn't protest to as a few extra, heavy turns of his thumb sent her careening over the edge, her hand finding her mouth as she almost screamed, vision tunneled to see only him as her pussy clamped around his hand, allowing for the slightest of movements. He didn't stop, no; he couldn't, he was obsessed with the red in her cheeks, the open mouth behind her hand, the wanton lust in her eyes. As she lowered from her high, intense aftershocks and his continued actions forced her to press weakly against his arm, whimpering for him to stop; with reluctance, he pulled away.

"Fuck..." she barely breathed, both arms winding around him again, pressed into his shoulder blades. His arm was still locked around her head as his second hand found his mouth, licking her flood from his fingers; just when she thought he couldn't get sexier.

"I'll give you two minutes and we'll do just that," he grinned, watching her own lips form a smile. 'Tell her,' his conscience shrieked, 'tell her before you ruin things further!' but his home, his life, his
wife were the furthest things from his mind with that succulent hellion laid under him; all he could think of were the seconds dissolving before he could bury his cock in her cunt again. "That is, if you want to."

She leaned up and dragged her teeth across is bottom lip, reveling in the soft growl that ejected from his throat. "I'm ready to go now, you fucking geezer; figured you were waiting for your little blue pills to kick in." He startled her as he dragged her hips flush against his, pulling himself up to discard the white tshirt he wore; he was just as gorgeous as she'd hoped. Muscular, olive toned skin, old faded tattoos from long forgotten nights, covered in a light smattering of dark hair; light on his wide shoulders, thicker along the centerline of his chest and down, lower, descending into his waistband...

"Don't you worry you little shit, this is all me," he grunted as he ground his bulge against her soaked folds before reaching to unzip. "I may have a few years on you--"

"Try a few centuries."

"--shut your mouth, Delle," his eyes narrowed on her as she clammed up, thrilled by his order, and the sight of his length finally springing from his pants. He was just as large and thick as he'd felt. "I may have a few years on you, but you know what that means?" He slid the head of his cock against her, coating himself in her juices and eliciting a shudder from his former student. He dug his teeth into his lip as he allowed himself inside; little by little, inch by inch as her mouth opened in shock and delight.

"It means experience," he groaned as he bottomed out with a final, hard thrust, taking a moment to hold himself still, struck by how she felt around him drenched, clenched tight, muscles spasming and twitching around him like electricity. His hips moved deliberately, angling himself just so to hit all her most delicate pieces; the results plain and displayed in her reactions. "Any pimply nosed teenage dicks ever fuck you like this? Any scrawny little sacks of shit make you come like I do?"

She blinked up at him with glassy vision, the feel of him inside her and his dark figure casting a long shadow over her form was almost too much to take. He was right; her previous partners had been lacklustre, two pump chumps who would leave her orgasm to herself. So far, Negan had proved himself leaps and bounds ahead of them; she was resistant to admit no person other than herself had made her come before him. He didn't need that on his ego.

"I asked you a question, Delle," her hands clapped over her lips again to hide a yelp as his fingers formed a slap against her clit; her cunt involuntarily squeezed hard around him. "Best you fuckin' answer. You don't want all this to stop, do you?" For a moment he ceased his actions, halfway in and out of her; it resulted in a pained expression on her face, one of submission he'd never thought he'd see.

"N-no, teach," she sighed, trying to wriggle herself further down his shaft; his hands caught her knees to stop her. "N-nobody fucks me like you do--!" Her head fell back as he rewarded her with a hard, heavy shove, his pelvis pressed dark curls of hair against her raw clit, and she nearly lost herself.

Nearly.

"Good girl." He chuckled as he resumed his task, his fingers comfortable holding her open at the legs while he pounded into her. He took in the show of her eyes rolling back in her head, her own hands roaming her form, grasping at her tits, working over her own nipples; she was like his own private toy, who knew just the games he liked to play. There was another level to it still; taking over her
senses, this frustrating little troublemaker falling so willingly under him made him feel something he hadn't in years. He felt powerful.

"Fuck me, Negan I'm close," she trembled as her fingertips grazed his stomach, begging him, daring him closer. He surrendered to her pleas, falling forward and sandwiching her between him and his desk; her head rested on one arm again as the other held her hip, kept her steady under harder, faster pumps. "Oh yes, fill me up!"

He was lost on the lust of her face, the ardor in her voice; his thrusts were almost animalistic, consumed by the urge to give her just what she wanted. "You first, sweetheart; I want to feel that sweet cunt come all over my dick."

His vocabulary could've qualified as a sex toy with what it did to her. The gravely baritone resulted in another release, long moans filling their air as her walls caved around him, milking him of his seed; the tiny scrap of conscience he had left admonished him for coming inside her again, but he couldn't have cared less. All he could see was her; he was hooked. His face was burrowed into her neck, drowning in the smell of her hair and skin, chest meeting hers with every panted breath.

"W-wow..." she mumbled, her eyes barely remaining open as she was finally released from her state, little shocks running down her legs.

"Same here," he agreed, breathless. "Never seen a girl who can come on command before."

She giggled, almost in a voice she didn't recognize. "Really? In all your years of experience?" There was that razor sharp tongue again, so quick to cut him; he'd suffer a thousand if it meant he could taste it. She pressed her hands against his shoulders, easing himself up and out of her messy pussy. He couldn't help but glance down and lick his lips at the sight; little droplets of white bubbling out of her pink hole.

"Belligerent little brat, ain't cha? How 'bout a 'thank you for the orgasms, Negan'"? He asked sarcastically, pulling his shirt back over his head.

"How 'bout a thank you for wrecking my shirt, Negan?" She retorted, toying at the ends of her blouse. In his greed he'd torn it to pieces, and she could just spot a button by a filing cabinet.

"Shit, sorry about that," he muttered, casting his eye around the room; she had him acting like a horny teenager. "Can I, um..." he trailed off, searching for some kind of replacement.

"It's fine, I'm just busting your balls," she laughed, hopping from the desk and straightening her skirt. She lost the tattered blouse and retrieved the standard issue gym shirt she'd brought for her brother; it'd do for now. He couldn't help but notice how she filled it out in the best ways. "There; modesty intact."

"Modesty?" He snorted, leaning against the now dampened desk. The room smelled of sex and sin; he hoped an air freshener would handle it before a student showed up.

"Oh fuck off." She chided, giving his arm a swat. He took the closeness to his advantage and wrapped his long arms around her waist, pulling them tight together.

"Never; I think you like my mouth as much as I like yours."

"Hm; maybe a little..." she pressed her lips to his, hands soft on his chest. The smile under her touch
was cocky, but she loved it; just like she'd loved goading him on as a girl, she loved challenging him now.

"Mm... much as I could go for round two, I'm gonna have to put this to a fuckin' close, Delle," he sighed and leaned his forehead against hers, brown doe eyes wishing for more. "Hope you don't mind me kicking you out?"

"Hardly," she scoffed. "I've got a shift at the bar soon anyway; gotta clean up before I head over," she bit her lip and looked away a moment. "I'll... I'll see you around there sometime?"

"Wild horses couldn't pull me away, sugar," she couldn't help but feel a warmth at his response. "Cheap drinks, quiet... plus I got a thing for the new bartender." He added with a wink and gravelly whisper. She smiled, honestly and genuinely. It had felt like years since she'd last done so, but something about him brought out a real delight. She rode that feeling, that pleasure as she said her goodbyes and left; if she was lucky she'd catch the last bus to her home.

The second she left his morals came pouring back to him, like his heart was submerged in ice water. He hadn't told her; admitted he was a married man, hadn't set any boundaries, fucked her all over again.

'You low down dirty bastard; you're gonna make it worse,' his better angels screamed at him as he massaged his temples, the weight of his situation hitting hard. 'You can't see her again, you can't talk to her again, don't even think about her!' He sighed and began straightening out his desk, wiping away any remnants of their sins and restoring his papers. Out of the corner of his eye he caught a glimpse of what she'd forgotten; black lace panties, barely clinging to the corner of the desk.

"Fuck..." he breathed, retrieving them, massaging the delicate material in his fingers. He wondered if she'd left them behind on purpose. "She would, that little miscreant." He smiled softly; only to be caught off guard by the sound of footsteps and a knock at his door. He spun rapidly, shoving the underwear into his pocket, right next to his wedding band. He was just quick enough as his new guest entered; god, he looked nothing like his sister.

"Hey Coach," Eric Cornish was exceedingly tall for his age, with sandy blond hair and big, hazel eyes; he was the total antithesis of Delle, 3 years his senior. He was already in his gym clothes, as he so often was after school. "Just came to get the keys to the utility shed; we're doing discus today right?"

Negan cleared his throat and gave a quick nod; he could only hope the kid couldn't smell the difference between sex sweat and gym sweat. "That's right. Get out a few pylons while you're at it, we'll run some suicides."

"Sure thing, Coach." He was so obedient; how in the world was Delle his sister? Eric, so quick to volunteer, go the extra mile, follow every rule; and Delle, always ready to bust forth and break them. Negan supplied him with the keys and the boy was on his way; track would keep them busy til baseball season.

Alone again, Negan's head began to pound with an oncoming headache; he knew today wouldn't be the last time. "Fuck."

Chapter End Notes
Ruh roh Negan, whatcha doin!?

Comments make me write faster, love to hear your comments and suggestions ;)

♡♡♡
Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

We'll get some proper face time with Negan next chapter; for now let us enjoy Simon in all of his mustachey glory.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"Hot fucking damn, bean pole!" Delle couldn't stop herself from laughing as Simon let her through to his barracks. It looked like a genuine home with bookshelves, dressers, even a television set; none of it ravaged or destroyed by looters. She bee lined for a small sofa tucked into a corner, bouncing on its upholstery.

"Make yourself at home, why don't ya..." he grumbled as he tugged his boots off, leaving them by the door.

"Look at you, living in the lap of luxury! If I had a place like this I wouldn't be so sour faced all the time," she glanced over at his raised brows; he was being kind enough to let her stay. "Not that it's a bad face."

His shoulders shook with silent laughter as he made his way over to her, sinking into the armchair adjacent. "Well thanks, Delle; been reconsidering the mustache lately."

"Oh don't you dare; that's your trademark!" She protested, letting her back settle against the couch; she enjoyed the half grin that crossed his lips at her plea.

"I'll take that into account... so Delle," he leaned forward, resting his forearms on his knees. "You're a little shit, huh?"

Her skin tingled at hearing Simon use Negan's old name for her; she pondered what the big Boss had shared with his second-in-command. "I've heard that once or twice." She admitted, twisting a lock of damp hair around her fingers.

"I bet you have," his eyes were hard on her, studying every reaction. "You're a little shit, but you're a bad ass, too; how long were you and your little group together, anyway?"

"I'd say about six months; but who can really keep track anymore?" She shrugged.

"Damn; and you lead them? Shit, with better men and more time you might've been a problem for us."

"I've always been a better leader than a follower," she said softly, thinking of the ragtag groups she'd flitted in and out of. "Rules... they were always difficult for me to stick to. Eventually I'd break the wrong one, do the wrong thing... just became easier to make my own," she let her eyes connect with his. "Some folks liked how I handled my shit and tagged along."

His large hand rubbed the back of his neck, a look of concern in his eyes. "It's good you're such a
tough cookie and all, but rules are kind of a cornerstone around here; break those, you get cell time or worse."

"I said they were difficult; not impossible," she pointed out. "I've seen the cells now; I'm not gonna go and ruin what might be my only chance at civilization."

He still wasn't convinced. "Do you really think you can follow Negan? He's done great things here, but he's a grade A asshole and a stickler for his laws; and your first time meeting wasn't exactly stellar."

'If only you knew, bean pole,' she thought to herself. He didn't need to know the extent of their relationship, not yet. "I've only met the guy once; but I see what he's accomplished. I might not respect the man but I can sure as hell respect his efforts."

"I sure hope so, Miss twisted; last thing I want is to see you end up on the wrong side of Lucille."

The name fell on her like a ton of ice; freezing fear shot through her like an arrow. She was here; she was here and Delle wagered already knew she'd been imprisoned. 'Fuck - looks like time is running out for me,' she tried not to let her anxiety show on her body, but her pupils were pinpricks. "L-Lucille?" She tried to sound cool and collected as she licked her suddenly parched lips.

"Yeah; pride and fucking joy she is--" His words were cut short by a knock at the door. "--come on in."

The door creaked open as a young man, barely a teenager, stepped in; he had a cloth bag in one hand, the other perched awkwardly on his gun. "T-the clothes you wanted, sir," he muttered.

"Great, thanks kid," he stood and retrieved the parcel from the cowering soldier. "Anything else?"

"N-Negan radioed in," he couldn't bring himself to look his boss in the eye. "Said he should be back tomorrow."

He looked over to Delle, listening intently. "Guess we're bunking down tonight, crazy," he turned back to the boy. "Send up some chow, would ya? Girl might just chew my arm off." The grin he gave him was only met by a shudder and wide eyes before the kid left them.

"Did you end up finding the cat food I asked about? I swear it's better." She perked up as he returned to his seat, tossing her the bag of clothes.

He chuckled, running a hand over his face. "Oh sweetheart are you in for some surprises. Go get changed, you look like a walking pillowcase."

"Fuck you too, Porn-stache!"

Delle tugged at the clothing Simon had proffered for her; she was split between whether he just couldn't guess her size, or had picked specifically tight clothing to hug her curves. The sleeved top was a dark red and just barely met edge to edge with the black, straight cut jeans that clung to her legs; she didn't hate the outfit but was wary of prying eyes on her figure. She didn't want to risk getting in a fight.

"Don't you clean up nice?" Simon declared as she stepped from his bathroom, having allowed her the privacy to change out of her prison threads.
"I do what I can," she shrugged, the hem of her shirt almost immediately riding up. "Could've done with a better fit though; I feel like a fucking strip tease."

"Oh, I'll be thinking of that later." He laughed as she nudged her shoulder into him. True, he'd kept her locked up for a week, but it was under Negan's law; and in their time together he'd been bordering on kind. She decided of all the evils she'd experienced, he was the least of it all.

The sun was falling low by the time food finally materialized at Simon's door; it was the first time he'd seen her speechless as she set eyes on proper, human food. She turned a small apple in her fingertips as if it were glass, and nearly sobbed as she sank her teeth into its tangy, juicy flesh.

"Fuck me sideways," she groaned, falling back to his sofa with a mouthful of the fruit. She would always remember the sensation of this bite; before the impossible had happened and the dead started walking the earth, there wasn't a point in remembering the last time one had bit into fruit, made your last phone call, last kissed someone... she now made an effort to remember the small sensations that made her feel human.

"Never thought I'd come for a granny smith, damn!"

He laughed, choosing a seat beside her and biting into his own. "You must've been a sailor with a mouth like that." He muttered through his mouthful, wiping juice from his mustache with his wrist.

"Hardly," she snorted as she took another hefty chomp. "I've always been mouthy; I mean somebody went through all the effort to make so many great dirty words, why not use em?"

He gave a nod as they finished their fruit, earning themselves some savory raw carrots; it was rabbit food, but Delle would've hid eggs all through Sanctuary if it meant another bite.

____________________________

She stared up at the ceiling of Simon's room, dark but for moonlight streaming in through a window; she could hear his sleepy, even breathing from his bed, the odd, light snore peppering in. She knit her fingers together over her stomach, restless and wriggling for comfort on his couch; but as he'd done countless nights before, Negan was keeping her awake.

She tried not to stir but her thoughts were running rampant; he was here. He was alive. Despite all the pain she felt when she thought of him, there was some cold, forgotten piece of joy and relief at seeing him walking and talking; even if that talking was to force new followers under his boot. She tried to picture him, in his new position; including the muddled years after the end of the world, she guessed at about... six years, since they'd last set eyes on each other. Stress and age had hit him but his features wore them well, those damnable dimples highlighted by his salt and pepper scruff; those teeth shining even brighter now.

But his eyes; that's always where her imagination failed. In dreams she could never see them right, he was always looking away, keeping them closed; but the eyes she'd stared into when she first knelt before him, insulted him for the umpteenth time, they weren't his. Or moreso they didn't make her feel the same way as she remembered; perhaps she'd finally let go? But no, something was lost in them, something had broken and been replaced by something harder, cold.

She sighed deeply, louder than she intended, as her fingers drummed against her skin. Tomorrow would bring questions, fights, tears, she didn't doubt; she prayed he might spit out some answers.
"You could try sleeping, twisted," she jolted from her back, hearing Simon's voice wafting from within a pillow; the sounds of springs and her groans had stirred him. "Big day tomorrow or whatever."

"Oh bright idea, sleeping at night," she waved her hands mockingly, knowing very well he likely couldn't see her. "Why didn't I think of that?"

He emitted something between a sigh and a grunt and she heard the rustle of bedcovers. She looked up as he stepped into the sliver of moonlight in the room, illuminating his face and upper half of his bare chest.

"Shove over, girlie," She swung her legs over the edge of the couch, clearing to one side; as he sat he reached for his end table, flicking on a lamp and casting a warm light across the sofa. He sank next to her, his long arm cradling his head. "What's going on in that fucked up little mind?"

She glanced over at him and couldn't help but pause; dressed in only a set of boxer briefs, his body boasted a healthy, hard set of muscles, dusted with dark hair and complimenting his long frame. She allowed herself a little curiosity at the sizeable bulge between his legs, but not enough for him to notice - she hoped.

"Nothing; just can't get my brain to settle." It wasn't an outright lie. Negan was stomping through her thoughts like he owned the place, but she didn't want to chance letting their previous encounters slip.

"Right," he poked a long finger against her skull, prodding a little harder than intended. "Nervous?"

She bit at her lip; why was it so easy to yield to this wannabe 70s pornstar? "Maybe a little. I just..." she didn't know what to tell him. Anything she said that contained any truth would belay her true past, and she was growing certain Negan couldn't have that.

Simon ran a hand over his sleep addled face, brushing his hair back. "Look Delle; you're a sweet little maniac, so I'm gonna level with you;"

She watched him with uneasy expectation, remaining silent with a little nod.

"Negan is the hardest son of a bitch I've ever fucking met," he stuck a finger in her direction. "Could reason beating some poor sap to death for a stink eye - but you jump down his throat and he wants a private meeting?" He threw up his hands with a shrug. "He's gonna make you a wife. Hands down, no question."

"He's gonna wind up with a fat lip and a black eye if he even suggests it!" Her voice raised in insult; in another life she'd have flung herself at Negan if he'd even suggested it, but in this world, with his pre existing wives, she wouldn't dare entertain the thought.

Simon's face changed with an expression of forlorn and pity. "You're fiery, girl, but he's got his ways; he can be real goddamn convincing."

"That's all well and good for big bad Negan but I am not a kept woman!" She hissed, arms crossing her chest. "He thinks he can throw his weight around, swing that stupid bat, and every woman will part their legs for him!? Fuck that!"

She glanced down as Simon laid a hand against her thigh; there was nothing possessive in it, if
anything it was comforting. "You're tough, kid. I hope he'll take your no; but don't go talking about Lucille like that, that's guaranteed to get you hurt."

Her brows knit, perplexed by his words. "What?"

"Lucille - that's what he calls the baseball bat."

Chapter End Notes

How're ya'll feeling about the direction thus far? Comments keep me writing and I'm always down for new opinions ♡♡♡♡

(Really tho the response has been amazing and I so appreciate all you gorgeous readers)
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

A little more background, and a little more sister/brother camaraderie.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Before...

Delle did all she could to make it to Eric's sports meets; even if it was as tedious as track and field, she wanted to be there supporting him. She'd come to every one since he'd started to show an interest in grade school, though had ceased with the glitter coated banners at his behest. Now she just screamed at the judges and coaches who ruled unfairly.

Well, most of them.

She'd chosen not to press Negan on what they were, or what it was they were doing; she had never really cared for definitions and stipulations. She had to admit she found it strange he didn't do the opposite; by-the-book Negan, always so eager for rules, had no problem meeting her at random intervals, whenever they had the time.

But that night was Eric's last track meet of the season, and she wasn't about to let a casual fling distract her from her brother's success.

"WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT, FUCKER!? HE WAS AHEAD BY A MILE, ARE YOU GODDAMN BLIND!!?" Her voice echoed above the din of cheers as Eric placed second in his heat; he beseeched her from the track to keep her voice down, throwing her a look. They had a ways to go into the night, but she had a set of lungs that could go for days.

"Would the lady in row A3 please curb your cussing," a voice came up over the loudspeaker; if there was one thing the school had funding for, it was athletics. The hightech sound system and 'home of the Timberwolves' scoreboard had been donated a year or so earlier by an alumni. "Or you will be removed from the stands."

She sank back against the bleachers, grumbling as she crossed her arms. She'd thought once she graduated that it would mean the end of the school surpressing her mouth; but she found no such luck. Stuck with waiting awhile until Eric was to take the track again, her eyes wandered down to the sidelines, finding her former coach almost instantly.

He didn't look much different than he did during the day; the chill in the night air demanded a hooded sweatshirt, though the zipper half done showed off the white tee underneath. Still, even in his most casual clothing, the sharp floodlights and soft tones of night struck him perfectly, playing up those deep dimples that rested in his cheeks. She watched as her brother ran over to him, speaking inaudibly; though he followed up with a point in her direction, Negan squinting and waving.
"You better not be apologizing for me, Eric!!" She yelled from her spot, careful not to use unsavory language. He waved sheepishly along with his coach, clearly having done just what she suspected. She stood and gripped the railing, holding eye contact with Negan as her brother turned away; there was something dark in his gaze. He always seemed to enjoy it when the flames in her burst forth and singed those around her; he almost seemed to relish being burnt. It was all she could do to keep from hopping over the rail and racing down to ravage him; but she didn't want Eric to incur that level of embarrassment.

After what seemed like ages, he was at the starting line again, her knuckles white on the metal bar. "C'MON CORNISH YOU'VE FUC-FREAKING GOT THIS!!" She roared at the top of her lungs, just as the race set off. It was a full 100 meter sprint; his best event, and he took off like a bat out of hell. He pulled ahead at first, but his fellow opponents were equally quick; as they rounded the curve a short streak of lightning from another school pushed forward. It kicked Eric's legs into high gear, and with every ounce of strength in his muscles he took the lead at the last crucial second, crossing the finish line and crashing full on into the gravel; and even from where she stood, she could see the blood.

Before she knew it she was on the field, matching her brother's earlier sprint to find his side; Negan had done the same, to look over his star athlete. He was seated and conscious, but his left side - shoulder, arm, leg and face - had caught a serious road rash, blood trickling from raw, red flesh.

"You fucking dumbass! Are you okay?" Delle had a way of scolding and comforting in the same sentence, her hands trembling around his wounds.

"I'm fine, Delle; calm down," Eric had a soft spoken quality to his words, caring more for his sister's fear than his bloodied body. "It's just a scrape."

"Just a fuckin' SCRAPE!" Negan barked at the kid; surprised by how concerned he was, and how upsetting it was to see Delle so scared. In private company he would've gladly held her and calmed her; out here he wouldn't dare. "You look like you got fucked by a highway, kid!"

Eric laughed and winced, touching the tender lack of skin on his face. "Yeah, I bit the dust pretty hard, didn't I?"

"Oh you'll listen to him," Delle shoved into his healthy shoulder. "You idiot, you can't scare me like that! What the fuck Eric, I-""

"Miss?"

"FUCKING WHAT!?"

One of the observing officials stepped back at her angry snarl. He gulped, the medal in his hand shaking slightly. "H-he won."
cheek; she bet herself he hadn't even kissed a girl yet.

From the utility shed, Negan could just make out her figure; there was something mystifying about her now. She was wrapped up in herself, a red leather coat on her back, carefully observing her brother like a siren sentinel; it was a new version of her he'd never seen, one he wasn't sure he was allowed to see. She was the same woman who teased him mercilessly, but in that second, she was some new creature entirely; and in it, his soul filled with dread.

"Hey dumbass," there was a barb in her voice as her brother found her hiding spot, wrapping her in a hug. "How's it feel, bein' champ?"

He grinned as he let go, thumbing his medal. "Feels pretty great, sis," his cheek twitched with pain, the ointment and bandages on it not halting his glee. She crossed her arms, a worried look on her face; one he'd seen many times before. "I'm sorry about the fall."

"You should be!" She pushed against his chest, though there was a sweetness in it. Delle was the closest thing he had to a mother but she would come down on him like a sister nonetheless. "You gotta be more careful, kiddo. You trying to leave me all by myself?"

She couldn't help the sadness in her words; their father was useless and the siblings were all the other had. She couldn't imagine a life without him, nor did she want to.

"Hey," he said gently, giving her hand a squeeze. "I'm alright. It's gonna take more than a fall to take me down."

She drummed her knuckles against his forehead, a smile on her lips. "Yeah well best not find out what that is, huh?"

From the crowd, the pretty blond girl called for him. "Fa-ang! You coming!?"

"Fang?" She asked incredulously. "What the fuck is that?"

He beamed sheepishly. "It's 'cause we're the Timberwolves," he said shyly, kicking at the dirt. "And I'm the Fang."

She doubled over in laughter, slapping a hand against her knee. "Wow -- teenagers come up with some crazy shit," she settled herself, wiping tears from her eyes. "Go on, Fang," she wagged her brows, his new nickname dripping with sarcasm. "Don't get too hammered. I'm not dragging your ass up the walk up just because you can't use your damn legs."

Eric gave her that same grin; pearly white and perfect, his own set of fangs as he ran off to his fans. She watched with a pride and forlorn, hoping she could make his high school years what hers weren't.

"Hey there, you little shit." She turned suddenly, seeing that tall, grinning coach sauntering towards her, ducking under the support structure of the benches. She tried to force her usual confident smile to her face as she leant against one of the metal beams.

"Hey yourself, you fucking geezer," she added an easy chuckle to her voice as she crossed her arms. He took the spot next to her, the edge of his elbow pressing her arm as his dark eyes studied her. "Should look into suing you, maiming my brother and all."
"Ah he's fine; kid's tough. Chicks dig scars anyway," he replied, tossing a hand off flippantly. He was more concerned with the sister of his star athlete; he leaned into her arm, the heat from his body emanating into hers. "You doin' alright?"

She closed her eyes, shaking her head with pursed lips. "I'm fine; just don't like seeing my boy a mass of blood and skin on the ground." She let her nails dig into her arms to keep from grabbing him.

"Who would?" He answered; scanning the grounds, he was fairly certain they were alone. Slowly he brought his arm around her waist, fingertips massaging the red leather around her as he pulled her closer; her dark hair resting on his shoulder. 'Fuck.' He thought to himself as he took in her scent.

"You don't have to do this, Coach." she breathed, wishing almost immediately she'd let things be as he swiveled to look her in the eye.

"What do you mean?"

"You don't have to play the supportive lover; I mean, I'm a big girl," she shrugged, tilting her head away from him. "I can handle shit myself."

"Hey," he said sternly; suddenly the strict, tough-as-nails authority figure was back in him, maneuvering her body against his as one hand tilted her chin up to his serious eyes. "Number one, that kid is one of the best athletes I've ever trained; I'm gonna fuckin' worry no matter who his sister is," he brought his face into hers, lips barely touching. "And two... you are the hottest fuck I've had in years, but that doesn't mean I don't care."

She was left wide eyed and shocked. She hadn't expected feelings bubbling under his virile exterior, particularly ones which matched hers; no matter how often she told herself otherwise. She shut those eyes as his mouth found hers, his kiss gentler, slower than she'd felt before with him. What was this feeling in her chest?

"Let me give a shit about you, doll," he murmured, his wide hand threading through her hair as he kissed her again, soft and quick, open mouthed and wanting. The want inside her was beginning to heat up, warming her neck as he did the same, hot breath joining his nibbles and lips down her throat. "'Cause I give a fuck about who I fuck."

"N-Negan..." she groaned, pressing her body against his; she felt his urgency against her as his wandering hands found her backside, giving a hard grab as he ground into her with all he had.

"I couldn't stop thinking about you all night, Delle," he confessed, her humid, uneven gasps filling his ears. "Do you know how un-fucking-professional it is to go walking around half hard at a track meet?"

She laughed at this, her palms cradling his bearded cheeks to force his eye to hers. They were hungry, as they usually were when trained on her; but there was a tenderness behind it that she didn't recognize. As curious as it made her, she was equally scared; but anything worth doing should scare you a little, right? She told herself as much as his arms snaked under her jacket, holding her tightly in another kiss; she was almost certain he'd bend her over the cold steel skeleton of the bleachers and have her right then. But without much warning, he stopped.

"What's wrong?" She panted, reluctant to let go of him.
"Just tryin' not to lose myself," he growled low, deeper than she'd heard before. "Pretty sure the school board doesn't think fucking under the bleachers an appropriate activity."

She breathed deeply, trying to quell the excitement in her core. "Then... take me somewhere."

He raised his brows, a smile across his face. "Come with me."

Any trace of his morals were left there, underneath the stands as he dragged her to his truck, wicked thoughts in his head of all he was about to do.

Chapter End Notes

I so appreciate every single one of you who writes to me, I literally want to hear everything you have to say; I loves you.

That being said, write me on this one too!

♡♡♡♡♡
She was in a new room; but she suspected it wasn't Negan's. It was far less appointed than Simon's makeshift palace, with a single bed on a metal frame, a small set of shabby furniture up against a corner - Negan wouldn't have settled for anything so basic. On the basic bedspread sat the bra and panties she'd come in with; clean and dry. Simon was keen to see if her plan would pay off.

She'd been told Negan was mere minutes away and so made quick work of switching into her underclothes; a wash had made them snug, pressing against the softer parts of her body. She turned and inspected herself, suddenly self conscious and admonishing; waiting for Negan in nothing but lingerie was something she'd done before, but now with the world over, it felt childish and stupid. Pulling her shirt back over her head, she went to step into her jeans as the door swung free.

"...well don't stop on my account, darlin'," Oh, that voice still sent shivers through her body; though not with the same intentions as it once did. "Could look at those curves all day long."

She breathed, collecting herself as she slid the pants up her legs, buttoning them at her waist; steeled her heart as she turned to face him.

"Hey Coach," How long had it been since she called him that? He could still hardly believe she was standing there, that same insolent look in her eye, same frustration on her mouth; with any luck he'd be on it soon. "This is a new look for you."

Negan stepped forward, eager to remove the distance between them; but as quick as he moved forward she moved back. He pursed his lips, dark brows furrowing in surprise. "You think?"

She took in the sight of him; that black leather jacket, the thick red scarf knotted at his throat. Those had been regular staples for him since before - she'd stripped that very jacket from his shoulders dozens of times. But his beard was thicker and whiter than when she'd known him, age beginning to catch up with his skin; but years sat well on him, if anything making him more attractive. She didn't dare look at his eyes, terrified of what she'd find looming there. This was Negan; but wasn't, all in one.

He was quicker this time, closing the space between them, his full height towering over her; it irked him that she wouldn't meet his gaze. "Delle..." he breathed softly, reaching out with his free, bare hand and placing it against her midriff; his thumb slipped just under the hem of her top, her skin just as smooth as he remembered. Still, she didn't look at him. "Delle, sweetheart..." he let his head bend slightly, his nose grazing her hair and breathing her nostalgic scent. She didn't move, didn't budge one inch. An anger hopped up inside him, his lip curling in impatience. "Delle. You could fucking look at me."
His words were like a spell, forcing her bright eyes up to his dark orbs; meeting that unforgettable, addictive gaze. She noted a difference; when before she'd seen ice, something dead and undone, she saw now a light so similar to the first time he'd kissed her. She'd liken it to happiness or relief if she didn't know it was lust.

He saw a difference in her, too; when last he'd seen those clear, bright eyes, they'd been soaked with tears, red with sobs. She'd never lose the defiance in that stare, but he saw so much pain, years of hurt. When he'd realized who she was, he saw the all too bleak fact that she was alone; and if she was alone, he knew she'd failed. Looking at her now, all that agony unspoken in her eyes, he knew he was right.

"...he's dead, huh." He muttered, his hand still locked on her waist, obsessed with the tiny patch of bare skin touching his. She took a sharp breath, offended and touched he'd remembered him, let alone ask about him; she wondered if she'd kiss him or slap him if he dared to say his name.

She didn't react, didn't confirm his suspicions, instead her eyes wandering to the named bat balanced on his shoulder. "...her?" She gestured towards his weapon, now knowing and understanding it's name well. He pulled it from its perch, his leather glove tightening around the handle. She saw a similar pain to hers flicker in his eyes, his tongue wetting his lips slightly.

"Early on." Was all he could bring himself to say; she chose not to pry further. She'd disrespected the bat's namesake over and over, she wouldn't intrude in her final moments now. But the sadness in her was quickly swept away, suddenly aware of his face mere centimeters from hers, that hand pulling her flush against his leathers; she only had a second to press her hand to his chest, the other in front of his mouth.

"Wh-what the fuck do you think you're doing?" She asked with narrowed eyes; his expression matched hers.

"Trying to kiss you," he said bluntly, not one to mince meanings. She tried to squirm from his grasp, but his second arm had coiled around her back, Lucille pressed firm to keep her still. "What's stopping you, doll?"

She chuckled, fury bubbling in her heart. "I can't believe I have fucking to say this again," she muttered through laughter. "Go back to your wife, Negan," the laughs ceased. "Or should I say wives?"

His hands dropped from her form, fingers tightening around his bat; he had hoped she wouldn't hear about the girls before he got to her. It had been wishful thinking, and his mind was scrambling now to come up with some new excuse to feed her; it seemed so much harder than it used to.

She crossed her arms, hip cocking to one side. "You've been busy, amassing sister wives in your little cult. You gotta let me in on your fucking secret, gramps; do you rape all of them or is your dick just magic?"

His temper jumped as he brought Lucille an inch from Delle's nose. "Hey," he growled, gnashing his teeth to keep from flying off the handle. "I don't fucking rape; every girl I marry gets a goddamn choice. I'm not a monster." Those words seemed to become less and less true with every passing day.

"You locked me up for a week and keep women around like walking sex toys; you sure you're not a monster, you fucking geezer?" The poison in her tone was palpable, though the use of his old
nickname had him optimistic that he hadn't lost her yet.

"Oh I'm fuckin' sorry darlin', didn't realize I was supposed to be saving myself like a damn virgin on the off chance you were alive in this fucking mess!" He threw his arms out, getting in her face; she saw a rage in his eye she'd only been present for a handful of times. "And you broke my fucking rules, Delle! Why not think of it as long overdue detention?" His laugh was cold but sounded so familiar she tried not to melt.

"Fuck you, Negan," her teeth were clenched but his heart skipped to hear his proper name on her tongue again. "You're lucky you have good people working for you; makes up for you being an utter asshole."

He felt a little twinge of jealousy in the bottom of his chest, thinking immediately of Simon; had his right hand maniac gone soft on him? Or worse, gone sweet on her? "They're all good fucking people. What I've done here, I've made a sustainable goddamn world; one people can actually live in. I've got kids under my roof," he paused as her eyes widened, realizing what it suggested. "They're not fucking mine, but I protect them, along with every last sorry shit in this place."

She ran her tongue over her teeth; he had a point. Despite only having seen small sections of his world, he'd created something she thought was dead; civilization. Running, hot water, an economy, readily available food - it was more than she'd ever expected to see in this hell. Her eyes found his again, looking more like himself than ever; those angry brows and twitching mouth made her feel young again.

"You... I want to join you," she admitted, her shoulders dropping in surrender. "You're a fucking dickwad, but you have something real here. I want in," he looked like he was going to embrace her again, but she quickly raised a finger in pause. "As a Savior."

His head tilted down in surprise, his body dipping slightly for dramatic effect. "A Savior?" He repeated, seeing the steadfast determination in her face. "You want to go back out there?" She nodded along, placing her hands at her hips. 'You're gonna get her ass killed, you can't lose her again!' His conscience had died with the world, replaced by some hungry, amoral beast; but it knew he needed her. He circled around to the thin mattress, letting his tall frame fold into a seated pose, resting his wrists against Lucille. "What makes you think you could be a Savior?"

"Did that bean pole of yours tell you dick all about me?" She spat back, leaning against the wall adjacent to him. She didn't want to let him out of her sight. "I'm strong, I had my own group out there; even if they were morons. I can follow your damn rules."

He snorted derisively, cocking his head in disbelief. "You? Little shit Delle is gonna follow the rules?" He stuck out his beloved bat towards her. "All it took was the goddamn apocalypse for you to tow the fucking line?"

She rolled her eyes. "There's a goddamn difference between being some teetotaling stickler and doing what I have to do to survive," she braved a few footsteps towards him, his gaze wary but inviting. "If I can be a part of this, know a little peace for once; I want in on this shit."

He sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose; she'd seen him do it years before, annoyed and perplexed. "You... you know you don't need to go back out there," he glanced up towards her. "I'm king of this castle; could finally treat you like I said I would..."

"Don't you dare even think about wifing me; I can pull my own weight. And when have you ever
fucking known me to take hand outs?" She tried not to startle as he stood straight again, that wide, masculine body near encompassing her without a touch. Being so close had sense memories flooding back; how his fingers had felt, what his lips tasted like. Her body ached to know if it was still the same, but her heart and mind remained guarded. "Make me a Savior. You won't regret it."

In the same instance, all he could think of was whether she'd still feel the same, impaled on his dick; though he doubted she'd give him the chance. His fingers twitched, dying to devour her in every way he'd used to, in every way he would kill for; but he tried to push it from his mind to focus on her demand. He knew she was strong, incredibly so according to Simon; but how could he let go all over again?

"...you can go on a supply run," he shook his head, his teeth grazing his lip. "How am I supposed to say no to that face?" He swallowed his urge to bend her over and allowed himself to cradle her chin in his palm. "There's one set for tomorrow. You're gonna pair with me, so I can see what you can do. Now," he leant in close, practically nose to nose. "Say thank you."

Her nostrils flared in fury and her nails dug into her palms; under different circumstances she would gladly have smacked him. But she had to keep her word; she could play nice.

"Thank you, Negan."

"Mm," he moaned with a closed mouth, his eyes closing a moment to imagine a different situation. "I could listen to you say that all damn day," when he finally loosed his grip on her she felt simultaneous relief and disappointment; he was so warm. "Now Delle, we need a couple ground rules to keep you in check. Don't need you throwing that pussy at me all damn day," he thought she might grind her teeth into dust with how hard she tried not to sass him; it was commendable. "First thing, nobody needs to know we know each other from before."

"Easily done." She spoke flatly, her eyes now dull to his dismay.

"Good girl. There's alot of fucking idiots out there who'd hear about you and jump at the chance to flay you alive; so you keep that sexy little mouth shut." In a way he'd surprised her; the silence seemed to be for her sake, rather than his own mystique. Not that she had many stories that would contradict the beast he was now.

"I'm touched. What's next?" She asked.

"Number two; you work for points," he threw his long arm over her shoulder and she stumbled as he began to guide her from the room. He knew the pathways like the back of his hand, spewing the standard welcome speech to her. "The more dangerous the work, the more points; and if you wanna go running around out there trying to be biter bait, you'll be flush in no time," she loved the way it felt as his bicep flexed and squeezed her arm, hating that she did. "Now, as for what you can use the points on; that's up to whatever your little fucking heart desires, sugar."

They'd reached a set of double doors, two middle aged guards watching over it. Each dropped to their knees as Negan came to a halt, their heads dropping in their bows.

"At ease, boys," he commanded, the men standing back up. "Folks do that 'round here too; guess I'll see you on your knees for me after all." He murmured his last words low and sultry, just loud enough to hear against her ear; she was upset by the rush of tingles that raced to her center. She tried to shake it as the soldiers swung the doors open; and Delle saw just what Negan had done.
People. Living, breathing humans - more than she'd seen at the Hilltop, in one place in years. The dull roar below was one of language, conversation and even laughter. People were trading, cleaning, cooking, eating and... living. She stepped from his hold to move to the edge of the raised catwalk, gripping the safety railing to steady her disbelief.

"You did all this." She breathed, her eye casting across the massive floor; he hadn't been lying, there were children down there, clinging to their parents' hips. Her mind worked to grasp that her ex gym teacher had somehow created his own nation in the midst of the apocalypse.

"Damn straight," he joined her by her side, gazing proudly at his creation. "Every goddamn inch; built it all from fucking scratch. Once we got the Saviors together, we did some real good works."

She didn't react, simply watched the world below; beginning to notice that a few were watching them back. Slowly, the room began to fall silent as all eyes were called to observe their leader and his guest; waiting for whatever rousing monologue he had to shout that day.

"Would you look at that, Miss Delle?" He pointed with Lucille, like an extension of his arm, to the quiet crowd below. "So well trained. That's respect," he raised a dark brow to her. "Think you can manage that?"

She gave him a mask like smile but glared with her eyes. "Sir, yes sir." She replied with a mock salute.

"Could get used to you callin' me sir, too," he turned and beckoned her to follow him down the stair to the masses below, the sea of people parting with every step he took. She studied the faces of those around them; there was admiration, gratitude, but the prevailing emotion she saw was fear. Negan was feared; but he kept them safe, true to his word. He ceased suddenly, in the center of it all, a circle having formed around them. "This is my world, little miss Delle; every single person and thing you see is fucking mine," he swung himself in a circle, light on his feet. "Who are all you fuckers!?"

"I am Negan." Her blood ran cold at the chorus that bubbled from the citizens of Sanctuary; they'd all bought into his legend, and as a result had made him such.

"Now Delle," he got as close as he could to her; in another time she'd have relished his proximity, his chest barely touching hers, hot breath against her face. "Who are you?"

She didn't let his bravado sway her; those whiskey brown eyes weren't going to disarm her this time; she told herself she didn't want him, that all she was concerned with was safety. Maybe in that instance, out on the factory floor, it had been true. "I am Negan."

"You're damn right you are."

Chapter End Notes

So how did I do everyone? Was it what you were hoping for? Please share as comments make me write faster!! (Just had to switch up a bunch of oncoming chapters, so all support is appreciated!)

♡♡♡♡
Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

Negan, you trailblazer...

Smut, milkshakes and feels!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

**Before...**

The popcorn ceiling was chipping away.

He'd found a cheap motel off the interstate, one far enough from the edges of town that nobody he knew would recognize him, or her; it hadn't been too great of a matter to either of them as they'd arrived. They barely made it through check in before Delle wrapped her hands in his leathers, capturing his mouth as he pulled her into their night-by-night room.

His kiss was always intoxicating; his lips soft, but ridged and rough in actions. He kissed hard and firm, aggressively, unafraid to use his teeth to tease her tongue and lips. It was almost enough to distract her as his fingers went to her jeans, undoing the button fly as she slicked off her jacket followed by his own, kicking off her shoes.

"Eager, ain't cha doll?" He teased, his voice gravelly and lusty; he was an impatient as she was.

"Shut the fuck up, Negan," she moaned as his mouth found her neck, hungry possessive bites and licks coating her flesh. He ceased only to tear her shirt up her arms as the back of her legs hit the bedspread; she allowed herself to fall back at the mercy of her partner. "I need you somethin' awful."

"Is that right?" He growled, drawing his tshirt over his head; that gorgeous tan skin, that deep dark hair and faded ink could've made her come by themselves. "What do you need me to do, darlin'?"

She leaned up on her forearms, watching him lose his shoes, pants; and finally his boxer briefs. She'd never seen him completely nude before, but it was a sight she could grow used to. She let her eyes fall to the trail of body hair that lead down to his sex, already half hard and growing moreso every second. "I need you to fuck me within an inch of my life, you fucking geezer."

He had never grinned so wide, dipping to dig his fingers into her jeans; with a hard tug he stripped them off of her, along with her panties. "We'll get to that," he purred with glee as she spread her legs for him, her slit glistening in the dim fluorescent light; he pushed her further up the bed, nestling himself against the mattress as he heaved her thighs over his shoulders. "For now I am fucking starving," he wasted no time drawing his tongue through her folds, eliciting a loud, joyful moan. "And mm, mm! You made my favorite."
She arched against his greedy lips, hips squirming as his tongue lapped at every inch of her sex; this was a first for her. "Oh... in that case dig in, Negan," she lost his name in a whimper when he wove heavy circles around her clit; her hands shot to his hair, forcing him as close as possible without physically biting her. "Oh fuck, fuck!"

He couldn't hear her clearly as her legs curved around his neck, her thighs like mufflers on his ears; he knew he was doing good work. With every lick he could taste more of her, her juices coating his scruff and only deepening his addiction. His stare was trained on her face, the way her face twitched and eyebrows raised when he tried something new. He beamed against her flesh, his arms circling around her hips to press his hands against her stomach and keep her from bucking and cracking his teeth; her muscles were giving him a run for his money.

She almost screamed, feeling his tongue press into a figure-eight across her clit; that was all it took, her body lost in convulsions as she called his name, over and over, her mind going blank but for the sensations he offered. Her skin kept twitching and spasming as he pulled away, broad form covering hers as he crawled up, that goofy grin coated in her climax.

"Goddamn, little Delle! Like sticking my face in a bucket of fucking water!" He laughed at the dazed expression on her face, her breath still coming out in heaves.

"That was... oh my god..." she panted, her arms curving around his back, fingers tracing his body hair. "Nobody's... I mean... no one has ever licked my pussy before..." her post orgasmic high had left her loose lipped and honest, much to his delight.

"I'm your fuckin' first!?" He chuckled, adjusting himself to line up with her messy hole. "I am honored as shit, then, Delle," he placed gentle kisses across her face, seeing her usual sass back to her eyes. "How'd it... feel?" He paused and groaned when he slid into her tightness, as eager to get started as he was to hear his score.

She shuddered as he filled her; her pussy was growing used to his girth, but it still stung slightly at first. Her eyes shut with his tip brushing against her deepest spots, that sting subsiding with a few slow, languid thrusts into excitement. "I'm waiting, doll."

"Mm... felt like... felt like I was a bottomless milkshake," she murmured, arms and legs clinging to him as he slid in methodically, rhythmically. "Like you were drinking every last drop, but there was always more."

He nodded slowly, humming deep as his hips rolled against her over and over. "That is one hell of an analogy, sweetheart," he rested his weight on his hands, watching obsessively as her cheeks flushed and breasts bounced with his movements. "Goddamn poetic!"

She slid her hands down to his ass, digging in her nails. "Yeah I'm poignant as hell; now let's pick up the pace, pops!" She swatted his backside, pulling him as deep as she could manage. He licked his lip to keep from drooling, slamming his hips in forcefully; her walls constricting around him while she yelped.

"Is that what you want, babygirl? You like me balls deep?" He grunted as he threw himself into her, more fervor and strength in each thrust.

It was exactly what she wanted, hard and vicious; bruising even, but still she taunted. "What happened, you throw your back out? I said fuck me!"
He took her challenge with vigor, his hands moving to grasp the headboard for leverage, his body meeting hers in rapid and forceful succession; she arched and moaned with every thrust. "How's that, doll? Can you feel - me - now!?" He roared each word as his thrusts promised bruises on her hip bones the next morning, her hands dancing across his chest.

"Oh fuck-- y-yeah, getting there..." she shivered, her climax already cresting with his brutal fucking; he'd have her screaming in moments.

He saw and felt her telltale signs; her eyes growing hazy, her mouth gaping and her already tight walls becoming a vice around his sex. It spurred him on, pumping into her waiting cunt obsessively. "Fuck you're so goddamn tight, babygirl... come for me, let me feel it..." that deep, gruff tone - as usual - was her weakness, but she tried to hold on, climb higher and higher before she let herself fall apart. He could see her efforts, her teeth close to tearing her bottom lip from frustration; he wouldn't allow that, and let his hand dip between their moist bodies for her clit. "Come for me, you little slut."

Something in those final words, he had found a spell to unlock something in her; the world seemed to shatter around her, all the nerves in her body singing his praises as everything went white.

"Oh fuck, Delle - are you okay sweetheart?" She blinked with fatigued eyes, her vision swimming as she began to register Negan's face, his hands on hers. Her body felt limp but lively, electric shocks passing through her muscles.

"W..what the hell..." she groaned; her pussy was sensitive and he was still inside her, though softening quickly.

He sighed, propping himself on his forearms, his hair mussed with sweat. "You passed out for a minute, sugar," he explained, watching as she reacted to his words. "Guess that was a little much for you."

"Eh... I did say 'Fuck me within an inch of my life', didn't I?" That grin found her lips as his matched, a thick laugh rising from his throat. "Didn't think you were so fucking literal, Coach."

Satisfied of her safety, he rolled off of her, his cock coming free with a light pop; once again coated in a brew of their own sins. "My goddamn apologies honey; I'm a people pleaser. And don't fuckin' lie to me and tell me you aren't pleased as punch."

She smiled and shut her eyes, allowing herself to sit up; his come pooled between her thighs like she'd upturned a pitcher. On uneasy legs she carried herself to the closet of a bathroom the motel offered, taking advantage of the amenities to clean up his spill. She could hear him breathing still, even his sighs sounding like growls. She switched on the faucet, letting water collect in her cupped hands before splashing her skin, dampening her hair.

"Feelin' alright, Delle?" The way he drew out her name always sent a warm slither down her spine, turning to a heat in her stomach. She wandered back to the main room, where he'd pulled up his shorts and tucked a portion of his tall frame under the ratty linens.

"You're gonna get fleas, getting all tucked up like that." She teased, gesturing towards the blanket; it was coated in stains that had refused to scrub out. He shrugged, scratching at his hair.

"I'm due for a flea bath anyway," he smiled as he earned himself a proper laugh from her lips; it was light, familiar. He was surprised how it warmed his heart to see her so relaxed - or that she warmed his heart at all. He beckoned her over and she took tentative steps to meet his palm with her hips.
"Hot damn... you're a fuckin' picture." It was his first time seeing her bare as well; he took the time to study the expanses of skin that clothing had previously kept from him. Seeing her little scars and blemishes felt like an even more intimate act than the one they'd taken part in moments before.

"You should take one then; it'll help you remember when the dementia finally kicks in," She rapped her knuckles against his forehead as she moved across him, her legs compressing the mattress on either side. His hands instinctively found her hips, keeping her steady; it was helpful considering she was about to allow her guard to slip. "You... thanks. For helping with Eric." A blush rose in her cheeks, feeling more embarassment for her vulnerability than their situation.

He smiled, his expression and demeanor lying about the growing knot in his stomach. "Gotta look after my ace, sweetheart. Just happens to be I'm fucking his sister." He'd proffered another genuine laugh, the sound of it working into his bloodstream like a drug. He let his arms coil around her body as she laid against him, his fingers woven in her hair against his chest; only then did his moral compass point back to him.

'You fucking dog; you deserve the fleas!'

'You're leading her on now; she's gonna find out eventually!' 

'This will kill Lucille - you piece of human garbage.'

'What was that bullshit about caring!?'

'You're gonna make her think you love her!'

'And you don't, do you?'

'Do you?'

'...do you?'

His eyes stared upwards, hoping for guidance to so many questions. The popcorn ceiling was chipping away.

Chapter End Notes

Jsyk the flashbacks are going to start getting more erratic, not a clear back and forth anymore.

That bein said, please leave a comment if you like my work! It really helps to keep me inspired and writing, so leave some words if you like mine ;) ♥️♥️♥️♥️
Chapter 14

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Delle was jarred from sleep by thunderous pounding on the other side of her door; she bolted upright, taking a few seconds to remember herself and where she was.

She was safe, tucked into her modest room; at the Sanctuary.

The feeling calmed her at first, but that peace was quickly replaced by the makeshift angel on her shoulder whispering in the back of her mind:

'Negan is here.'

She sighed and ran her fingers through her hair, hoisting herself from the surprisingly cozy bed; the linens were warm, clean and the mattress didn't squeak too terribly. Nonetheless, she found herself unable to sleep as soundly as she did on the road. That shit eating grin would find its way into every dream, that signature bat swinging dangerously close to her mind's eye.

Again, banging on her door. She let her morning temper get away from her as she stomped over, casting the door open. "WHAT??"

Negan raised his brows to her, Lucille still raised to smack against her door again; he was glad he'd been the one to fetch her, given her state. She was dressed in her black underwear, nothing else, the ends of her wild dark hair just barely obscuring her nipples.

"Thank fuck I didn't let Simon do it.'

"Mornin', beautiful!" He crowed, restoring Lucille to the place of honor on his shoulder. "I'd ask if you're ready to go, but unless you're planning on putting on a strip show at all our stops, I'm gonna go with no." His eye ran shamelessly down her body; he made note of a thick, mean scar that sat on the front of her thighs; they matched almost perfectly directly across.

"It's fucking early, pops; is the sun even up yet?" She retorted, turning to pad her way to the meager selection of clothes at her disposal. She was growing accustomed to the skinny legged jeans Simon had found for her, but today chose a lengthy black tshirt to cover herself to the hip; she supposed she should've been grateful they let her keep her boots, even though she didn't feel it.

"Just about, doll," he took a few steps into her room, the same he'd met her in the day before. He knew better than to offer her part of his quarters right away; and didn't much feel like explaining to his wives who she was. Not that he owed them any such explanation. "We rise before the sun around here; and don't expect any special damn treatment around here, I'll expect you to be up and ready to fucking go on your own by tomorrow."

Her lip curled at his demands, but it was nothing impossible. "Sir, yes sir. Where to, big bad Boss?"

He caught her shoulder in his naked hand, his face suddenly stormy and serious.

"I wasn't fucking around yesterday, Delle," he muttered, holding her gaze. "Nobody needs to know about before. And a key goddamn component to that is curbing that sassy fucking attitude. It might get me hard as a rock in close company but that shit does not fly out there," his hand moved to her chin, keeping her still. "You understand?"

Her eyes rolled in an exasperated circle, a quick nod of her head freed her from his touch. "Yes Negan." She replied. She tried to ignore the ache at the thought of his dick hard because of her, and
her strange enjoyment of his domineering orders.

"Good girl. C'mon, let's get you outfitted," he turned and she followed dutifully, keeping in step with his wide strides. "Gotta get you armed; no Savior of mine is goin' out there unprepared. What's your pick? Hunting knife, semi automatic?" He tapped Lucille against his shoulder. "Baseball bat?"

"A-Actually I came in with a few weapons... any chance I could get those back?" She swallowed deep, her mind on her precious Fang.

"Well let's head to the armory. If we found it with you it's mine now, and if it's mine it's in the armory," he ambled down a hallway that looked halfway familiar, though it'd be ages before she'd know her way around. "Assuming nobody else claimed it yet. Was it cool, your gear? Generally the more awesome the weapon, the shorter it's stay."

"Pretty fucking awesome." She grumbled as he ceased in front of a mesh gate door. Despite extensive digging, her search for her beloved Fang came up empty. She'd taken exquisite care of the blade on the outside, keeping the edge polished like a razor; any dumbass with eyes would want it for themselves. She chose a simple, traditionally bladed machete with a little battle wear on it; feeling decidedly less confident without her personal weapon in her grip.

"Too bad, sugar," Negan clicked his tongue, taking her forearm in a firm but careful grip as he pulled her from the weapons cache. She spent the remainder of their walk in silence, turning the new blade over in her hands to grow used to its weight; it felt foreign and unwelcome. As they came to what appeared to be an exit, Negan paused, squeezing her wrist. "Shit, I forgot something," he admitted, groaning. "This blast from the past is fucking with my head. You go on, doll; the team knows you're coming."

He strutted himself back the way he came, maybe with a slightly quicker step. She threw her eye from his departure to the doors in front of her, an inexplicable nervousness falling over her; she pushed it aside along with the door, sunlight almost blinding her; it had been weeks since she'd been outdoors. The world outside the Sanctuary buzzed with life. A team of five or so individuals, heavily armed with the looks to back them up, moved across the barren yard, doing final checks on vehicles and weaponry. Beyond the fences she could see some of the poor devils she'd been grouped with initially, all clad in grey and minding the garden of corpses that guarded the massive citadel.

'There but for the grace of Negan go I,' she mused, pulling an elastic band she'd 'found' from her pocket and lacing up her hair; unruly as ever but less obstructive. She watched the show, each member of the run like a dancer with their own part to ensure everything went smoothly. She wondered what her part would be, or if she'd ever know the steps.

"Ho-ly shit Miss Twisted!" A friendly voice coaxed her from her observations; from a line of trucks came Simon, long legs whisking him to her spot. "You really went and did it- a little Savior-in-training!" S

he threw him a cocky grin, leaning her fists to her hips. "Hiya bean pole. Don't tell me you doubted me!"

"Like I said, Negan's persuasive; how'd you get him to let your ass out here?"

She shrugged. "Told him I'm a better fight than I am a fuck. If he's not satisfied with my results today, I find a job inside," she lied expertly; although he seemed like Negan's right hand, she didn't want to break her ex's trust so early. "But I'm not taking dick for food. I've got some morals, damn."

"Well congratulations ya little freak," his lengthy arm reached forth and tousled her hair, knocking
loose a few locks. "Strut your stuff today. Oh and by the way," he dropped his head close to her ear, that long limb snaking around her neck. "I cannot wait to see what that messed up little mind can do."

"Simon!" She bounced from his grasp as Negan's bark threw them both off guard; he stared them both down as if he'd caught her with his lieutenant's dick in her mouth.

"Hey boss," Simon kept his calm, arms crossing his chest. "Just sayin' good luck to our newest hopeful; hope she doesn't wind up dead and all."

"Yeah that'd be a fuckin' shame," Negan's words agreed with him, but the tone screamed to fuck off. He turned his attentions to Delle. "Think you came in with this, yeah?"

He raised his hand, holding her jacket out to her. It was the same one she'd had for years, one he knew well; he knew it on sight when he saw it added to the clothing inventory, and the smell of her in it acted as confirmation.

She was taken aback by the display of nostalgic kindness, retrieving the leather garment from his hands. Threaded her machete through a belt loop, she took her time slipping it over her shoulders and zipping it halfway up she glanced up into his face, seeing a flicker of longing cross his features.

"Thanks boss," she murmured, running her palms across the well warn red hide. "Red's always been my color."

"Shit," there was a giggle in Simon's tone as he looked at the pair. "You two look like two sides of the same damn coin."

He was right. With her in red and Negan in black, she must've looked like some cartoonish version of him. "Well ain't imitation the sincerest form of fucking flattery?" Negan grinned as he leaned down, nose to nose with the girl he had to pretend he didn't know. "Should I be flattered, doll face?"

'You fucking know I've had this jacket for years you dickwad! This is my goddamn look you're the one imitating it fuck you! Fuck you and your stupid goddamn cult and your stupid goddamn bat--' Delle made to silence the angry, honest voice in her head. "I suppose that's up to you, boss." She stuck a coquettish little smirk on her lips, retrieving her machete from its makeshift holster.

"I'll take that as a hell fucking yes then!" His laughter boomed, and if the rest of the team didn't know he was there before, they did now. She watched as each dropped to a knee, wondering if they could speak on command too. The three made their way to a line of trucks, the rest of their outfit assembling around them. "Alright, boys," Negan began. "Got a new project for us today. We got intel on a nigh on untouched factory out south; so we'll pop down there real quick and see what's worth keepin'. Let's keep shit tight on this one, folks." His orders fell on obedient ears; aside from Delle's. But she would try to pretend, at least.

"You want to ride with me, Delle?" Simon knew he was pushing his luck in asking. Negan's reaction to his closeness to Delle had been possessive; but given she was outside, ready for a raid instead of slinking into a little black dress, she must've refused him, right?

"She's riding with me." Negan shoved him, his arm taking a place on her shoulders. His stare was stern and daring Simon to react; make a move and see what happened.

"How 'bout I just ride in back like everyone else?" Delle gestured to half the group; they were hoisting themselves into the back of what might've been a delivery truck in its previous life. She shot Negan a glare; he had fusssed so much about special treatment, now he wanted the lowly recruit at his
side? Hardly subtle.

"Perfect." Simon grinned; although she wouldn't be right next to him, she'd unknowingly picked his vehicle. She slid from Negan's grasp with little grace, winding her way to the back of the truck. The arguments of the two men didn't interest her at the time.

No, her concern was with a young man with dark hair and a scruffy goatee.

Or more specifically, her Fang slung over his back.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!!

Comments keep me inspired and writing faster, so whatever you're thinking I wanna hear it!

♡♡♡♡♡
Chapter 15

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

The reasoning for bringing a smaller crew on this trip was obvious as soon as they reached the locale of the factory. It had been unintentionally quartered off by a massive, permanent traffic jam of abandoned cars, packed in so tightly and so thick that the expanse stretched on half a mile. Long trapped undead held between bumpers writhed and reached for them as they approached, and Delle could see a smattering walking free past the pileup. There was plenty of clean up before they could reach the grounds.

"Alright kids, hope you did your goddamn calisthenics!" Negan, ever headstrong, hauled himself onto the hood of a car to allow for more machismo as he spoke. "Now here's hoping there's some good shit in there; whatever it is, let's not be stupid and get our asses hurt or bit. Sound good?" He wasn't expecting an answer as he began to carve out a path, his long legs striding across roof tops like stepping stones.

The team followed suit, taking all necessary measures to keep up with their leader. Delle moved as quick as her legs could carry her, though they were significantly shorter than Negan's muscular tree trunks. Her lesser stature resulted in her using hoods and trunks to maneuver, rather than roofs as almost everyone else had. Still, she persisted, studying the powerful, grisly men who'd joined the mission, but moreso she dwelled on the man she knew too well. Negan - stomping across mangled steel, going of his way to crush the skulls of struggling biters, roaring with laughter, high on his own legend. In this light she could barely see him as the man she'd known, trusted... and eventually destroyed.

'He destroyed you right back, don't forget,' her conscience was quick to come to her own defense, reminding her of her mantra. Don't forget had been the words she latched on to, when her world was ended and the apocalypse had come. Three short syllables reminded her to love the happiness she'd been allowed, to learn from her mistakes and more than all else to hold her ground. She had to hold her ground; as easy as it would've been to fall into his arms, feel his touch and know him all over again, she wasn't about to fall into her old patterns. She hadn't given him a choice then, nor would she now; her life would be paved with her decisions, and she wasn't waiting around for Negan to make them for her.

She found herself pulled from her thoughts as she felt her foot slip between two cars, the toe of her boot getting wedged in a wheelwell; she yelped as she went down, her front clattering against the trunk of the offending vehicle. "Fucking shit..." she muttered as she tried to wriggle her ankle from the cranny, but found frustrating resistance.

"Y'alright there, sweetheart!" Negan's voice rumbled from far ahead of her, and she could just make out the figures of the other hunters where she laid.

"I'm fine, just sun bathing!" She protested, the crevice she'd fallen into annoyingly persistent in its hold. She was thankful for the lack of dead around her, but wasn't thrilled with making an ass of herself when trying to prove her mettle.

"Let me help ya out there, Cinderella," she glanced behind her shoulder to see Simon's usual cocky smile on his lips, his long fingers gripping her ankle and boot to maneuver her from the wheelwell.
"Best to look before you leap, little psycho."

She wound her ankle in a circle to ensure its health before standing, brushing herself free of nonexistent dust. "Nah, I'll just keep running around blind," she squeezed his bicep appreciatively, noticing the heft of the muscles in her palm. "Thanks though."

Negan's cheek twitched at the sight of her putting her hands on Simon; if those hands belonged on anyone it was him, not his lackey. "Now that graceless has found her fucking legs, let's go!" He snarled returning to his path, trying to focus on the task at hand; she was pushing his buttons whether she knew it or not.

She took more cautious steps across the sea of wreckage, becoming embarrassingly aware of Simon, never straying too far. She glared at him despite his kindness; getting rescued wasn't going to convince Negan into allowing her into Saviorhood. 'You just wait, bean pole; I'll have you both eating crow.'

She was the last to make it off the pileup, sour looks on her comrades' faces and Negan tapping Lucille impatiently against the ground. "Took ya long enough, kid." He grunted, turning his attentions to the mission.

There were roughly fifteen biters roaming the grounds of the factory, that she could see; she guessed the traffic jam had acted as a lock around the industry, keeping overall numbers low. They look like the hadn't been fed in years; a good sign the contents of the building were undisturbed, though it meant they were starving, meaner. Delle jumped at the challenge; she liked them mean.

She blocked out the sounds of her fellow Saviors as she concentrated on two dead ones coming at her in full force; their skins decaying and putrid, mouths gaping and starving. Her blade wasn't her Fang but it did it's job; she raised it and swung heavy into the first one's skull; hacking a lethal slice directly across its eyeline. She pulled her weapon free - though not as easily as she would Fang - and turned to the second contender. He was considerably larger than her, and she knew her force wouldn't land her a reliable blow on her first stab; she'd need to cut him down a peg. She waited for him to grow closer before dropping to her haunches, a two handed slice severing his leg off at the knee. She kicked her leg out to keep the ghoul from falling forward before moving up its body, bringing her machete down through its one empty eye socket with a heavy plunge. This, this she was good at.

"Fuck, fuck it's stuck again!" Sound returned to her in the form of a cry, as she cast her eye to the long haired man holding her Fang; using him all wrong. He'd got the curve of the blade trapped in the shoulder of his walker, unable to pull it free; the dead thing still lively and grasping for his flesh. She felt fury bubble up inside her and trudged over to him, knocking him from her Fang's hold to grasp the handle herself. "Dammit kid!" She groaned, giving her familiar blade a sharp twist; the length of it now curved sideways from the corpse. She stepped around the corpse in a careful, using the angle to retrieve it's hooked curve; now free she slid it back around the biter's neck, and with a strong pull towards her it'd head separated from its body. "If you're gonna use this fucking Fang you could learn to do it right! Fuckin' christ!" She ground her teeth as she brought her boot down into the walker's skull, silencing it for good.

"I-I had that..." the man grumbled like an insolent child, hauling himself to his feet.

"Oh you most certainly did fucking not!" Negan joined their little scene, throwing his arm around the man she'd saved. "The fuck was that, Jared!? Had to get your ass saved 'cause you can't tell a
weapon from a weed whacker? Fuck!” He chuckled, his chest rumbling; but she could see irritation in his eyes.

"I said I had it! This new bitch shoved her way in--"

"What the hell did you just call me!? You want me to separate your head too 'cause I can do that shit all day long, fucking watch me di--"

"Hey!" Negan protested, bringing Lucille against the ground with a hard thud. "This team has got to play fucking nice if this trip is gonna be anything but a waste of fucking time. Think you two can handle that?" Jared gave a quick nod as Negan turned to Delle; he knew the look on her face well, irritation and anger all balled up inside her. "How 'bout it, doll? Play nice?"

She flexed her free fist, her grip on her Fang never loosening. "Yes, Negan." She growled, without taking her eye from the bastard who'd used Fang so carelessly.

"Good girl," those words still sent a heat to her core, as little as she wanted to admit. He stepped from Jared, studying them both a moment. "You two can switch weapons too; seems she actually knows how to use the damn thing."

Her heart swelled at his decree, and she couldn't help her face lighting up. Her Fang was nearly right back where he was meant to be.

"Oh c'mon, it was a fucking fluke! I--"

"Take the other goddamn machete Jared," Negan was nearly nose to nose with the boy, a grin on his face daring him to argue again. "Don't make me fucking repeat myself."

His subordinate backed down, fetching the basic blade from where Delle had tossed it. Negan watched as Delle beamed, running her fingers over the black flat of the blade; he let a smile across his face to see her so happy. Had he heard her call it Fang?

"Negan!" Simon's call from the side door of the facility caught his attention. "We hit the fucking jackpot, boss!"

And they had - they'd found themselves a cannery.

Chapter End Notes

I wasn't 100% on the locale for this chapter, but I hope it's still an entertaining read.

Please comment or kudos, writing to me helps me write faster! ♡♡♡♡
As she unlocked the front door of the apartment she shared with her father and brother, Delle felt like she was floating. She hadn't intended to fall asleep at the motel but couldn't deny how good it'd felt to wake up safely nestled in his long, powerful arms. Realizing the hour she had whisked herself away, a kiss against his hair before racing back home.

Negan made her do plenty she didn't intend to; she hadn't intended to fuck him in that alleyway, or his office, much less let him sweep her away for some tryst like she was in a goddamn fairytale. He had an enigmatic way about him, convincing without a word; but she liked it. She found she didn't mind doing the things she'd never intended on, in fact she relished it. Despite her unruly nature and vicious mouth, he could undo her so quickly; and it felt good to be undone, once in awhile. She knew he liked her roasting him as much as he did watching her come apart, an unusual trait her past boyfriends had tried to quell in her; but Negan never did.

'He's not your fucking boyfriend, dumbass,' her conscience eagerly pointed out as she settled herself in her bedroom, shedding the previous night's clothes for a tee and leggings. 'You're just... having a good time.' She knew this, and for the moment, it was fine. His little speech about caring about her had been sweet, though she suspected it was only a method to get her into bed; if it was it'd worked perfectly. She could live with their physical relationship for the time being, his years on her providing an expertise she'd never felt before, and she wasn't about to give up those mind melting orgasms for childish, air headed feelings. Even if she had them.

As was usual for a Saturday morning, her father was coiled in a ball on their couch; he reeked of his drinks from the night before, his sandy hair stuck to his face with what she hoped was sweat. She frowned as she stuck a towel beneath his head, hoping to save the upholstery from too much damage.

"Morning, sis," she looked up to see Eric, still bandaged and wincing, limping from his room. "You just gettin' in?"

"Yeah," she spun a quick lie in her head. "Barnes called me in at the bar last night; by the time we shut I was so beat I just slept there." It wasn't her best.

Eric gave a kind nod. He could plainly see the remnants of hickies around her neck, but he wasn't about to shame her for enjoying herself; she did so much for him, it was her business how she
wanted to have fun.

"Brutal." He smiled, following his sister as she made her way to the kitchen.

"How 'bout you, Fang?" She'd be using that nickname to tease him from then on. "Wild and crazy night for the school hero?"

"Not really; went out for a bit but the pain meds did a doozy on me," her brother always had a sweet way of talking, like he was on a kids’ show. "Came home and crashed a few hours after the parking lot."

She ruffled his hair on the uninjured side, setting a box of cereal in front of him as she fetched milk, bowls and spoons. Despite an excessively hectic life, she tried to eat with him as often as she could; it was often the best part of her day.

"Don't worry kiddo, you've got years to go running around and fucking yourself up," she said confidently as she fixed herself breakfast. "Hopefully not quite as skin removing next time though."

"Yeah, here's hoping. Pretty sure Coach Negan is gonna ream me out on Monday." It made her nervous to hear his name in her home, like an invasion. Eric had talked about his favorite teacher before, but that had been before all of her most recent... run ins.

"He's got nothing to bitch about," she declared off handedly. "I put him through way worse in my year. You're a goddamn angel."

"Fingers crossed he remembers that when he's tearing me a new one," Eric gave her a hopeful smile as he sank a spoonful of cereal into his mouth. "He can be a real hard ass sometimes."

'You'd be surprised how soft that ass is.' She shooed away the immediate thought in her head, simply raising her brows with a closed mouth chuckle. "Oh I remember; he's got a stick up his ass the size of a flag pole."

Eric snorted, wiping milk from his mouth. "Oh c'mon, Delle; he's not so bad. I mean he got me a win, right?" He was quick to defend his mentor, nearly worshipping the ground he walked on.

"Oh please; that medal is all you, Fang. He just put you on the field at the right time," she took a beat, swirling her spoon in her leftover milk. "Though I guess he's given you some good pointers."

Coming from Delle, words like that were practically praise. He drained his bowl before bringing it to the sink. "He's been good to me; honestly I think he was expecting the worst when I first joined his class. What did you tell him about me?"

"Just told him you were another Cornish; any conclusions he came to after that were his own fucking fault." She let out a nasty little giggle; it was a long game but worth the payoff. She remembered Eric's early days of high school, coming home terrified of her ex gym teacher; he'd been preparing for another little demon but had wound up with an angel. It took half a year to convince him it wasn't an act.

"At least he figured it out eventually." He shrugged and took her empty bowl, washing them up.

"Maybe he's not as thick as he looks." She teased. 'You know he's exactly as thick as he looks, you slut.' Her inner self was even more merciless than her outer.
He gave a light laugh, crossing the kitchen and small living space to the bathroom; he needed to redress his injuries. She followed and watched a moment as he flinched trying to remove the old dressings. He'd always been adverse to pain.

"Oh let me, you dumb shit." She grumbled, sitting him on the toilet seat and taking over his care. He whimpered as she peeled the gauze from his wounds, his skin juicy and healing. She kept a well stocked first aide kit in their home which she fetched and began her task. She allowed each injured area to breathe before applying an antiseptic ointment. He shuddered as her fingers massaged in the cream, but managed to still himself.

"Appreciate it, Delle." He said sheepishly as she wound fresh bandages around his shoulder.

"I'd say anytime but if you do this again I'm gonna fucking kill you." She glared at him but it came from a place of love. She hurt to see him hurt.

"How come you never look after me like that?" A whiny, much-hated voice filled her ears. She turned to find her half drunk father swaying in the doorway, frowning at her kindness.

"Maybe if you didn't deserve every bruise you get, I'd do you the same for you." She hissed and concentrated on her brother's pain.

"Oh fuck -- so I'm supposed to bleed out in the street somewhere just because you're too selfish to help me?" His dark eyes narrowed on his daughter, crossing his arms.

"Only if I'm lucky." She retorted; regretting her mouth as she felt her parent tug hard on her hair, pulling her onto her ass.

"Don't talk to me like that, Delle," he was angry, his words falling from him like black sludge. "I'm your father and you will treat me with some goddamn respect; you don't have that fucking bear of a man around to protect you..."

"Dad, would you stop!?!" Eric protested, catching his father's shoulder. Snapped from his anger by his favorite child, their father let go of Delle's hair, letting her stand; Eric swung his arm around her shoulder to keep her from attacking him. "She's just tryin' to help."

"Heh, maybe she shouldn't have a goddamn horse sucker punching me at her fucking bar then," he sneered at his oldest (known) child. "Did you blow him right after or did he get a turn on the Delle-y go round?"

"Fuck you, Dad." She seethed, pushing past him and into the privacy of her own room with a slam of her door. Her fingers twitched in anger, wishing she could rip him apart with her bare hands; he treated her like shit, and if she had it her way, he'd be eating shit. She tried breathing deeply to quiet her rage but found little relief, sitting on her miniscule mattress.

"Delle?" Her gentle brother called from outside a few minutes later. He'd corralled their father, but she was another matter. "Can I come in?"

She grunted an affirmative reply, the sweet young man entering. He gave her an apologetic look as he settled next to her on the bed.

"I'm sorry about that..." he sighed, running his hand through the sand colored hair he'd inherited from
his father.

"Don't you dare apologize for him. He's a bastard waste of space," she stared at him with close knit brows, scowling. "You don't get to say sorry for being hurt."

He gave a nod, biting at his lip. His sister was a titan, one caged by the restraints of her life; he was moreso apologizing for being one of her shackles. "Alright... are you gonna be okay?"

She straightened up, sniffing defiantly. "Always am." She said plainly; even if she wasn't, she wouldn't let her baby brother go trying to fix her life. Some things can't be unfucked.

He knew better than to prod further, her rigid body a telltale sign to shut up. "Okay..." he said softly, patting her knee. "What the heck was he talking about anyway? A bear-man?" He said cheerily, trying to lighten her mood.

"Oh," his question did anything but cheer her; it made her anxious. "Couple weeks back... your Coach happened to drop by the bar when Dad was being a dick. He decked him when he saw him slap me."

Eric's mouth fell wide with shock. "Wow! Guess I'll need to thank the Coach when I see him next." He said it with a knowing chuckle, only adding to her anxiety.

"What's so funny?"

"Eh, I shouldn't be laughing," he shrugged his healthy shoulder. "Just nice to know you didn't actually have to blow anyone for helping you; especially considering it was Coach Negan."

"What d'you mean?"

"He's married."

Chapter End Notes

... and there dropped the other shoe.

Don't worry folks, we're still ramping up!!

Comments keep me inspired and writing faster so I can keep up with my posting schedule! ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The little things you miss in the end of the world might surprise you; it might be the sound of a song you heard at a dance, maybe for a moment the air doesn't smell like death, it smells like home. The smallest sensations can leave you forlorn and nostalgic for a time when you could live without fear of death around every corner.

For Delle, that sensation was meat. Like so many other things, she couldn't remember the last time she'd eaten meat before everything came crashing down. Sure, there'd been an old bag of jerky or can of tuna here and there, but as the months stretched on, meat proved no longer viable.

So when she sank her fingers into a can of beef stew, tasting the congealed goo on her digits, she was fairly certain she'd died and gone to heaven.

"Holy fucking fuck," she exclaimed, sucking the flavor from her fingers like it was air. She couldn't have cared less at the eyes staring at her and her nigh orgasmic experience with her food, slurping out what she could from the jagged edges of the can. "This is amazing."

Every member of the search party had been granted one can each, after doing extensive inventory on which cans could be brought back to Sanctuary; they deserved 'a treat for not fucking it all to shit' as Negan had so elegantly declared. He was off by Simon, discussing transport while watching the way she licked her portion from her fingers and trying not to mount her on the spot.

"We should be able to take at least 15 cases back with us; then we'll send second string to get the rest." Simon had a good handle on planning and logistics, one Negan had always found useful. He valued intelligence and loyalty, and Simon had both in spades; at least until he caught her looking at his girl.

'She's not your girl, you moron,' his conscience - long thought dead - had settled into the role of reigning him in at every dirty thought, possessive tendency. Sometimes it worked, other times less so. 'You fucked all that up years ago.'

"Fine plan to me, Si," he placed a meaty paw on his second-in-command's shoulder, giving him a shake. He tried to push the mental images of him fucking Delle to the back of his mind; even contemplated telling him the truth of who she was, in an effort to keep him from touching her. But now wasn't the time, if there was a time at all.

"B-boss?" The nerve wracked voice of the man he'd set to guard the doors snuck up behind him. "We've got a problem."

"Oh what the fuck now?" Negan groaned, dipping his shoulders back before following his guard back to the entrance; immediately seeing the issue.

Past the wreckage, there was an expansive herd of the dead passing through the remaining open highway; they were rubbing up against their trucks, though there was nothing of value inside for them, nothing alive. His face twisted in frustration, heaving the door shut. "Let's baricade this shit, kid," he thumbed at the door before beginning the route back to the storage floor. "Well folks, there's
a hefty fuckin' pack of biters out there, and I've got no plans on dying today. So looks like we're sleeping over!" His men turned at his words, a hand on his hip as he stared directly into Delle. "Who wants to cuddle?"

She pursed her lips and tossed her empty can, wiping residue from her mouth. The building was begging to be explored. She took up her Fang and made for the factory floor, intent on searching every room.

"Where ya goin', Delle?" She glanced over her shoulder to see Negan staring impatiently, tapping Lucille against his boot. "Dangerous to go wandering off on your lonesome, sweetheart."

'I can handle my fucking self, gramps, you clingy little dicked asshole! You're not my fucking baby sitter fuck you--' she ceased her cruel thoughts with her sweetest smile. "Yes, I know. Simon and I were going to go looking around, see what else is useful around here," both her and Negan's eyes fell to Simon, very different expressions on their faces. "Isn't that right, Si?"

Her tall superior blinked, glancing between the young woman and his boss; one looked so inviting, the other like he was about to rip him in two. "Uh... sure, why not." He shrugged; Negan might've been king but he couldn't have every lady in his castle, no matter how much he tried.

Negan ran his tongue along the inside of his lip, fingers flexing on Lucille. He knew the kind of looks Delle's body received, and he didn't entirely trust her to be alone with him; he knew her type, and Simon fit the mold. "Sounds like a blast. I'll join you."

She prickled but succumbed, knowing this was the least objectionable option. She'd hoped for alone time but had got stuck with two quarreling alpha-males trying to get into a dick measuring contest; but at least she didn't have to sit around doing nothing. She continued her path down to the factory floor, past extensive canning machinery as the two apocalyptic titans followed in tow like lost puppies. She knew their goal; but watching them trail behind like she needed saving couldn't have turned her off more.

"I'm really fine, boys," she piped up, banging the hilt of her Fang against a door and listening for sounds on the other side; silence meant safety. "I can look after myself for five minutes, I'm not gonna fucking break." She grunted out her final word as she swung the blunt end of her machete down on the locked handle, knocking it from its place.

"Then you can protect us when a gang of biters come to munch on our nuts." Negan explained with a shrug as she lead their expedition through the busted door. Simon, ever the boy scout, flicked on a maglight to survey the room; it appeared to have been an office, based on the filing cabinets, shabby leather couch, utilitarian wooden desk, and the business casual corpse sat behind it with a bullet hole in its head.

"Son of a bitch!" Negan whistled low, moving to the dried out body. "Looks like this fucker got out while the gettin' was good." He cracked the dead fingers to retrieve the small handgun from within.

"Knew how to go out with a bang, too; hot damn," Simon's attention had been caught by the mostly full bottle of brown liquor sitting on the opposite side; he unscrewed it and brought it to his nose. "Whoo-wee, the man's got taste. Drink, Negan?" It was customary for him to surrender any goods found to Negan; even if he didn't want it himself, what his men found was his.

"Well don't mind if I do," he took the bottle from his outstretched arm, taking a long swig. Delle in
the meantime roamed the corners of the room, digging through cabinets and drawers; most of it was business papers, a long expired lunch sack... until she came across the bottom drawer of the corner most cabinet; the man at the desk had kept a full bar stocked.

"Bet I can do you one better, bean pole," she stood with a grin, Fang under her arm as she raised her strong hands, balancing a multitude full bottles between her fingers. "Or five."

_________________________________________________________________________

She hadn't seen men so drunk since her days at the bar. Negan had decided the team had done well, granting them two bottles to share amidst themselves; provide not a 'motherfucking soul up chucked their guts'. He didn't put alot of stock in a man without the resolve to hold their liquor.

She'd refused when they offered it to her; finding it peculiar, almost insulting, considering she'd found the stash, but a hard look settled them quickly. She preferred to keep her wits about her. If she drank, she drank alone, knowing full well the trouble she could get into with a man's company. Negan knew it just as well, and couldn't hide the slight pout when she'd declined a sip. He'd forgotten it within the range of his second drink, allowing himself a little relaxation with his trusted group. They weren't geniuses; but they listened, obeyed when he called. They were the type needed in the end of the world, the foot soldiers that helped the King protect his kingdom. From the youngest boy to the oldest foagie, Negan was glad to have them in his arsenal; not that they'd ever hear that.

She observed from against a wall as the men laid sprawled across the storage room floor. They'd taken precautions in securing all other exits from the building, in the event the herd outside proved tenacious. Most snored, completely comatose in their stupors; even Simon lost his commanding expression in his sleep, his features soft, lips wet with drool against his curled bicep. She smiled, watching him roll to his back, sighing in his slumber; she wondered what he might be dreaming about. Delle had to own up to the fact she was intrigued by the lanky thing; ever since she'd set eyes on his near naked form in his bedroom she'd find her thoughts straying back every so often.

'He likes you, you know,' those inner demons were eager for a partner; it had been ages. 'I'm sure he wouldn't say stop if he woke up to you bouncing on his cock...'

"I'm not going to ruin this shot." She breathed, silently enough that no one reacted; most of them were out cold. She was going to try her hardest not to stir the pot, as she often did. The world she'd been roped into was surviving, thriving, and she could keep her urges in check if it meant she could be part of it; her biggest rule being 'don't fuck Negan's top man'.

Then there was Negan.

She'd been resisting looking at him, a few feet from her on the same wall. He'd balled up his jacket, wedging it between the wall and his head as a makeshift pillow. He slept with his arms crossed, chest rising and falling with deep, even breathing. Unlike Simon, Negan's brows remained knit and serious in sleep, as if contemplating some deep philosophy. Lucille laid beside him, never straying far from his grasp; it stung her heart to see it.

"I know you're starin', sweetheart." His voice startled her, rasping and whispered as he opened one sleepy eye towards her. She hated the heat that filled her cheeks, upset she'd been caught.

She hoped he couldn't see the redness in her face through the darkness. "Just thinking, boss." She
said softly.

"What's buzzing around in there then?" He rolled to his side to look at her, as best as he could with the lack of light and imperfect sight. 'God you're getting old...'

She glanced over at him, uncertain of what to share. "Just... mulling over your little empire," she replied with a soft giggle, music in his ears. "Figuring out how to overthrow your ass."

"Like to see you try, doll face," He wasn't about to give her the insubordination-is-termination shtick, not when she was finally relaxed. Maybe it was fatigue, but she finally sounded like herself again. "I'm a pretty popular guy."

She laughed louder than she'd meant to, clapping a hand over her mouth. "Right, okay," she murmured, levity in her tone. "You're a freakin' peach."

"Bust my balls all you want, I know you want a bite." She could practically see his teeth gleaming with his comment. He wasn't wrong; the arousal she'd felt with him was still there, cloying and clawing at her soul. She could roll over and submit to him right then and he'd be hunky damn dorry with it; but she couldn't let him in. Not so easily.

"Do you even sleep?" She tore the subject away from peaches and bites.

"Sure do; on my big ass bed in my own fucking room back at my Sanctuary. I'm fuckin' spoiled, now; can't get a wink on this cold damn concrete." He straightened himself against the wall, letting his adjustment edge a little closer to her.

"Oh so you're a brat now," she rolled her eyes towards him, noting his increased proximity. "Uneasy lies the head that swings the bat."

He chuckled at her quip, his distinctive drawl ever present in his laughter; how could it still send chills down her spine. "What really has you up, sugar? You all wound up?" She knew he was wiggling his brows at her in the darkness. In truth there was an itch she'd hadn't the chance to scratch, but he wasn't sinking his claws into it.

"I'm just keeping an eye on things. Your boys got a little too shit faced, and someone should keep watch." She explained, casting a hand at his drunken soldiers. Sleep was nipping at her eyes, but she was used to all nighters. They were common when alone.

"We're locked in tight, darlin'," he pointed out, becoming more blatant in his actions, growing closer still until they were nearly shoulder to shoulder. "Nobody's gettin' in and nobody's gettin' out without my say so. You can relax." The way he nudged her then, a quick press of his arm to hers, brought her instantly to long lost nights with him, a subtle touch between two people who shouldn't have been touching at all. It was hard not to cup his face and kiss him, as she would have back then; but not impossible.

"I'm fine, you fucking geezer. Stop preening over me." There was a bite in her voice, but he loved hearing his nickname from those lips.

"Heh... goddamn end of the world comes around, but you're still just the same." He chuckled, his head rolling with a shake of disbelief.

"The hell do you mean?" She turned her head completely, looking at him straight on.
"You were always keeping an eye on your brother," she bristled to hear him mention her family. "Always had to see he was doin' okay, I wasn't working him too hard... seems that never changed."

"Yeah." She said curtly, falling silent. Negan could tell he'd hit a nerve, something painful. He knew he had to be dead; Delle wouldn't have let them be separated by anything else. He wanted so badly to know if he'd heard the name for her blade correctly, but chose not to press further; like so much else between them, it just wasn't the time.

"Delle," he spoke her name as gently as he could, the mood feeling foreign on his tongue; he'd all but abandoned gentility years ago. She watched him carefully, her sight allowing to see a firm expression through the night. "Get some shut eye. That's an order."

She curled her lip a moment but wasn't about to argue. She let her body slide down the wall, curling into a tight ball on her side; just as she was settling her eyes snapped open, to feel him moving behind her, his broad chest barely grazing her back.

"N-Negan, don't." She hissed, waiting for one of his hands to grab at her; surprised when he did nothing.

"Calm your tits, Delle," he mumbled quietly, his timbre sounding like a rolling storm. "Just getting cozy; shut those pretty little eyes. I'm right here."

'I'm right here' were the words she took with her to sleep; dreams surprisingly calm and subdued. She hadn't slept so soundly in weeks and didn't even bother pushing away when she felt the weight of his arm around her waist.

Chapter End Notes

I'm actually kind of proud of this chapter, despite how long it is :p

I can't wait to hear from you guys ♡♡♡♡
Remember comments make me write faster and keep my spirits up, so please drop me a line or two.
Before...

He felt like he hadn't seen her in years. In truth it'd been two weeks, but as the school's baseball season was ramping up, he had little time to pull himself away. There was something odd, too; he could've sworn she was avoiding him. He thought he saw her once, meeting her brother after practice, that trademark laugh catching his ear; but he assured himself if it had been her, she would've at least said hello.

It wasn't until the weekend he was able to weasel his way from under Lucille's eye to drop by the bar; she'd been up later than usual, but Negan hardly noticed anymore. Truthfully Delle was taking up more of his mind than he wanted to admit, his thoughts regularly working out strategies to meet with her, so eager for the next taste of her flesh. The moral, straight laced side of him knew it was wrong, terrible of him, but his dark side loved being let out to play; and there was no better person to play with.

She was working away in a surprising Saturday rush; he couldn't remember when he'd last seen the place so packed. The bar lined with filled seats, he settled for a table near the front, waiting an uncomfortably long time before she finally came over to him.

"Hey doll," he gave her his usual cool smile, those dimples deep when he looked at her. "Been awhile, hasn't it?"

"Hi, Coach," she said flatly, her eyes fixed on a tiny notepad, waiting for his order she already knew by heart. "What're you drinking?"

He noticed the attitude. She was being professional, unfamiliar and borderline polite; it wasn't like her in the least. He pulled his lip past his teeth before responding. "Usual...three fingers."

"Got it."

"Delle, I--" she vanished before he could finish his thought, whipping from table to table at breakneck speed. It irked him further when the owner and only other employee - Barnes - dropped off his drink.

"What's with your barback, Barnes?" Negan asked, having a decent relationship with the older man. "Gave me a colder shoulder than a fuckin' polar bear."

"Just been a busy night, Negan," the old man replied, running his hand over his balding head. "She's got her hands full."

"She'll usually at least chat for a minute..." he muttered, taking a sip from his glass.
"Ah, just a frenzy! Besides, she's got plenty of old dogs nipping at her ass 'round here." With a laugh and a swat on his shoulder, he was alone again, ears filled with the buzz of the bar; he was surprised how upset he was by the idea of other men even looking at her. They were by no means exclusive, but there was something about her that was uniquely... his. Maybe it was how she sounded when she screamed his name or the look on her face when he filled her, but he was disturbingly attached. He wanted to think she was too.

She didn't set foot near him the rest of the night; even as the bar began to clear, varying degrees of drunks ambling into the street, she remained behind the mahogany counter like she'd planted roots. Two more whiskeys and alot more angry, he held his patience up until it was nearly deserted, storming up to the bar.

"What the fuck," his question was deep and furious, his fingers clutching at the bar. She didn't even lift her eyes from the glasses she was cleaning, stacking them in obsessive order. "You're acting like a frigid bitch, like I'm a goddamn ghost over there." Still she said nothing, just taking a deep, long breath. "Did I do something to fucking upset you? Because I can't think of a single fucking reason--"

"You're married." she interrupted and his blood turned to ice. Her eyes finally found his, overcoming his rage ten fold, mixed thoroughly with hurt and betrayal.

"Shit."

"'shit'? That's all you have to fucking say?" She brought her fist down against the counter, trying to keep from punching him. "You're fucking married and that's all you have to fucking say!?"

He'd been had; caught in the act. The angel on his shoulder was gleefully stabbing him with vindication, chanting 'I told you so!' in rapid succession. In an instant he could see all he'd done laid bare; he'd lied to her, snuck around, given her hope.

'How could you do this to Delle?'

'Lucille. You mean Lucille.'

"I..." he muttered, a hand rubbing across the back of his neck. The pain radiating off her was palpable, embarrassed she'd let herself be wounded so deep. "Yeah... I'm married."

"You fucking pig," Every muscle in her danced with fury, dying to hurl glasses, throw punches, claw his eyes out, pull him close, kiss him... 'Stop, Delle.' "You're a goddamn asshole, Negan." Tears stung at her eyes but she wouldn't let them fall, he didn't deserve to be wept over.

"I know." He mumbled, his eyes now stuck to the bar; he felt more ashamed over torturing Delle like this than he did for cheating. Something in him was seriously broken.

"I can't believe I let this fucking happen," she threw her hands up in shock, her eyes wide and frantic. "How the fuck didn't I know? Do you even wear a ring, was I really being that much of a fucking whore not to notice you wearing a motherfucking wedding ring!?!"

"I don't wear it anymore," he half-admitted. He still wore it around his wife, but for all intents and purposes he went without the band. "This... this isn't your fault, Delle."

"Oh I know it's not!" She hissed, her hand tight on a glass as she twisted her rag inside it. "I'm just
the stupid fucking girl who wanted to get off with her teacher!! What the hell is wrong with me? Never mind what's wrong with you, th--FUCK!"

The old glass had shattered in her grip, shards of glass writing new, physical wounds to add to her fresh emotional scars. Blood seeped from her palm, a thick, red flow that dripped onto the rubber matted floor.

"Shit, that looks mean; do you have a first aid kit or something?" Negan sprang into action, going to step behind the bar as she dashed for the back room; only to be stopped by her bloody hand, held up in a plea.

"Don't you fucking touch me. Don't you come near me." Her demand felt like a piercing blade through him as she stepped past the dividing curtain. Muttering expletives he turned, hauling his jacket from his abandoned table as he left.

She gingerly picked slivers of glass from her wounds with a set of tweezers before dipping into the first aid kit for rubbing alcohol and a dressing. Wincing as she treated her cuts, she knew the bar was now empty; Barnes having left an hour before, the last few patrons leaving as her fight with Negan had kicked off.

Married. How had she never noticed? She tried to remember his hands in her freshman years, struggling to remember a band on his finger; but maybe her mind didn't want it to be, letting her forget any such jewelry's presence. She tried to picture his hands now, sliding along her thighs, expertly massaging her breasts; was there a faint tan line along that olive skin? She stared at her bandaged hand, a cold comfort in the irony that she was just as hurt outside as inside now; it didn't shock her when she saw the gauze darken as fat, wet teardrops slid down her cheeks, weeping silently in the storage room. Her arms went round her side, clutching tightly, begging her heart to stop feeling as it did; forsaking it, knowing it wouldn't. She'd grown too attached, more than she'd intended. She cursed his name, wishing he was still within earshot, daring to come in and keep fighting; but her prayer was unheard, falling into the unyielding silence and quiet.

Chapter End Notes

Shorter, angsty chapter today, sorry guys :( had a really awful day n' it left me burnt out.

Please comment if you're liking so far, keeps me writing and updating!♡♡♡♡
Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

By morning the horde of dead had all but moved on; only a few stragglers left over by the trucks. Delle's stature meant she would act as a guard while the heftier men carted case after case of soup to the transport, cutting down any unruly biters to clear the most even path. With Fang in her hand, it couldn't have been easier.

"Good work, boys!" Negan's usual attitude was back in place and as colorful as ever, casually swinging Lucille into the heads of trapped walkers; it looked like some twisted game of croquette. "Let's get the fuck out of here, we'll send out the collection team with Arat and Gavin when we get back."

Delle kept a close eye on the movers as they set the last of fifteen cases into the truck; it'd be a tight squeeze but all five grunts would fit just fine. She was still up on the roof of a car as Jared pulled up the rear with the remaining liquors, giving her an evil eye.

"You got somethin' to say?" She didn't abide looks like that, least of all in her direction.

"Must be nice, bein' Negan's favorite," he hissed, pausing on the trunk of the same car. "Bat those ditzy goddamn eyes and he's butter. Bet you got him wrapped around your cunt, don't cha?"

Her temper flared faster than she could get a grip on it. "Suck my dick, asshole! I'm holding this Fang because I know how to fucking use it! You're the brainless motherfucker who nearly got himself killed--"

"Christ on a goddamn CRUTCH, kids!" Negan was already sauntering over, a disappointed strain on his face. "When I say play nice you play fucking nice! Since when did we start disobeying my word of fucking law?"

Like an obedient dog Jared set down the box of liquor, climbing from his platform. "She's the one starting shit, she's a fuc--"

"I swear to God if the next thing you say is 'fucking bitch' I will gut you right here." She snarled, brandishing her Fang in his face.

"You're not off the goddamn hook either, doll!" She tore her eyes from Jared to Negan, his expression just as irritated on her. He rubbed a hand across his face, a heavy sigh on his lips. "Who the fuck are you?" He asked.

Jared immediately dropped to his knee, eyes locked to the ground. "I am Negan." He chimed dutifully.

Negan wasn't looking at him though. His eyes were on the insubordinate little troublemaker who still stood proudly on top of the car. Her chest was rising and falling with angry breaths, her nose and brows scrunched in fury. It would've been cute if he didn't have his reputation to think about.

"I don't ask twice, sweetheart." His voice was glowering and black, it set off a nervous knot in her
stomach. Slowly, without losing his eye, she sank down to one knee; her head still raised defiantly, shoulders back and proud.

"I am Negan." The words dripped with poison, a tone he'd never allow from anyone else; but she was a different case, and she knew it. He hated that she knew it.

"...you're fucking right. And as my goddamn namesakes," he brought Lucille down against the hood of the car, resulting in a jolt from Jared; Delle didn't move. "I expect you not to act like goddamn children." With a heavy hand he took Delle's wrist, yanking her from her pedestal.

"W-what the hell!?" She snapped as he dragged her to his truck.

"You're riding with me. Gonna learn you some fucking manners."

She was thrown into the cab before she could argue further, the door slamming shut as Negan barked a few remaining orders at his men. She thought she heard Simon speaking for a moment but was quickly shut down. Before she knew it, Negan was in the driver's seat, starting the vehicle with a hard glare in his eye.

"I... okay maybe I took that too far." She offered slowly, pulling herself to a seated position.

"You were a whiny little brat is what you were." His words were sharp, eyes locked on the road and truck ahead. He kept a tight grip on the wheel, his emotions stewing.

"He was being a dick!" She countered, crossing her arms. "Said I'm getting special treatment 'cause I fuck you..."

"I can tell ya that's mighty fucking untrue," he scoffed, his dick twitching at the thought. "If anything you're getting special treatment for not fucking me."

She shot him a look, her lips pressed in a tight, thin line. "I never asked for anything special."

"Oh you fucking did and you fucking know it!" His head snapped to her to grimace before returning to the road. "You think anyone in my empire became a fucking Savior by demanding it!? You think anyone but you tries to run their mouth like you do - least of all to yours fucking truly!?" She was starting to realize his point, as much as she didn't want to. "I'm not taking you on fucking runs if you're gonna do whatever the fuck you want."

"Please, don't," he caught the desperation in her tone, her hand reaching to grab his arm. "Don't keep me inside..." he felt her fingers squeeze his flesh in her begging. He gave her a pained look, trying to find a solution.

"Delle," he began cautiously, one hand crossing to touch hers. "You can't go pulling your sass anytime you please. I've got a system and I can't have you throwing a wrench in things."

His brows furrowed as she pulled her hand back into her lap. "Why not let me out on my own then?"

"No fucking chance," he snorted, looking to her skeptically. "I still don't trust you not to go running off." 'And god knows what I'd do if you got yourself killed.' His inner self added in silence.

"Then just send me out with Simon."
The suggestion made his blood boil; here he was at the end of the world with a girl he'd nearly forsook everything for, and she was choosing another man.

'She's not choosing anyone, you're being unreasonable. Loosen the lead, she won't go running.' He mulled over the idea, his expression stormy and unknowable.

"I'll think about it."

She slumped back in her seat, pouting like a child. "You didn't change either; same rules, same old stick up your ass..." the truck came to a screeching halt, Negan throwing his arms on the console and seat back to dwarf her in his presence; his eyes blazed and his face bore a mask of rage.

"My rules keep people living, Delle!" He bellowed, the glass of the windows practically vibrating. "The world is a fucking wasteland and I am rebuilding it, so you best get on board if you want to survive!" His face was barely a breath from hers, huffing. "My goddamn system runs because every lousy fucker in it does what they're told. So you," he gripped her chin in his leather gloved hand. "Will do what I fucking tell you."

The tension in the cab was thick as blood, Negan realizing in the same instance his position and the look on her face. The expression was shock, fear... but her pupils had dilated so wide he could barely see the irises, her cheeks had flushed such a sinful red it almost looked like blood. Her nails were dug deep into the old, vinyl upholstery she thought they'd cut straight through.

"Why..." he growled, relinquishing the hold on her jaw. "Why can't you just let me save you?"

And like that any sign of arousal was gone, replaced with a pain he'd caused years ago. "I was never yours to save."

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for all the support last go guys :) I really appreciate it. Please leave a comment, they help keep me writing and fast! ♡♡♡♡♡

Also: I'm something of an artist, would you guys be into seeing how I picture Delle? Lmk!!
Chapter 20

Chapter Notes

So I didn't get a lot of feedback on Delle, so I'm including a link to her sketches here:

http://i.imgur.com/1yWN9vI.jpg

Have a peek if you like, but if you don't want to ruin the illusion that's fine too!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Before...

She tried going back to normal, sticking to her routine. Kept her head down, Delle sank into her work; would jump at every chance for overtime, taking someone else's shift, anything to keep her distracted. Her fingers ached, muscles burned; her skin started to smell like a mixture of sugar and hard liquor. But every night, without fail, he'd be back in her mind again.

She felt like a failure, her subconscious being so intensely obsessed over him. She felt like the air headed freshmen and sophomores who giggled and blushed over him; the all important difference being she'd actually had him. She knew all the secrets those girls wondered about; how his lips felt, how his skin tasted, how big he was. None of it soothed the hurt, it only made her want him more. As much as she actively told herself no, she'd feel that longing, that ache inside her she didn't even know about until he'd calmed it the first time.

It didn't help that Eric came home nearly every night after practice, gushing about some new drill or play his darling coach had cooked up. She couldn't even tell him the truth; couldn't tell him to stop and silence all his excitement, so she smiled and suffered as he went on, grinning ear to ear over the man she'd been dumb enough to fall for.

"How come you haven't been to a game?" Eric asked one night as they tidied after dinner; she was still in her Salder's uniform, already thinking of her upcoming shift at the bar.

"Work's been kicking my ass lately," she mumbled, setting plates away. "Besides, aren't you undefeated so far? Maybe me not there has been a good luck charm, Fang." She elbowed his ribs in jest, but his expression was still pouty.

"I like when you're there, though. I think I'd play better if you came." He replied, turning to face her straight on.

"I'm sorry kiddo, but so long as we want to eat I've got to work." She shrugged, hoping to quell his begging with that.

"Please Delle? There's a game on Friday night, I really want you there." Eric Cornish's puppy dog look was lethal; she could never say no to it.
Which is how she found herself on those bleachers, encircling the baseball diamond that Friday night, focusing so hard on her brother as Negan focused so keenly on her.

He couldn't believe she was actually there; he could only guess Eric must've held her at gunpoint to get her to come. Her eyes were locked on her brother, determined not to look at the Coach; he'd need to engineer a glance if he was going to get anywhere.

"Hey! Fang!" He barked, his dutiful student scurrying over to him; almost everyone had taken to calling the kid Fang. As he made idle game chat with the boy his eyes glanced up to Delle, finally meeting her gaze; he could feel the anguish seeping out of her, ashamed of having caused it. More than anything else, he felt shameful; he hadn't meant to hurt her, though he knew he had. There was no avoiding that. His eyes searched hers as much as he could from a distance, finding it off that for all her anger, pain and sorrow in her look, he didn't seem to see hatred. Strange.

Fang had healed up well after his accident, only minimal scarring left behind. In his uniform the teenage girl masses were evenly split between he and Negan, swooning over their school hero, their Fang. Tonight would prove no different; he had a mean swing, sending the hard ball yards every time he was at bat. He had to admit, he loved the cheers of the crowd when he succeeded, but noticed the distinct lack of his sister's voice, profane and loud, over the din. He'd glance over and see her merely clapping and smiling. It felt like she was no longer Delle, replaced somehow. Something had happened.

Another win. He was happy about it of course, but his larger concern was his sister; he pushed politely past the throngs of congratulating fans to worm his way up the bleachers.

"Kicked ass tonight, kiddo." She gave him the most genuine smile she could manage, though it was met with a tight frown.

"Something's wrong," he said accusingly. "Something's off with you Delle; you haven't been yourself in weeks. What aren't you telling me?"

What could she say? He loved Negan; he walked on water in the kid's eyes. He had him on track to be something, get out of the sinkhole that was their town; a broken heart wasn't going to stand in his way of a life.

"I've been stressed out, is all," she mumbled; not an all out lie. She was dealing with stress, the answer ambiguous enough to allow some secrecy. "Really Eric, I'm fine. Stop worrying about me!"

She heard herself laugh but barely felt it.

"I'm gonna worry. You can talk to me, Delle. You know there's no judgement here."

'If you knew there would be plenty,' she thought. "I'm fine, really. Just stress, lack of sleep," again, not a lie. "Don't worry, I'll be glitter signs in school colors for your next one. Promise."

He knew he wouldn't get more out of her than that; not right at the moment. He had to settle for the bits and pieces she allowed out little by little before he could see her whole picture. It was tedious, but he'd play along.

"Alright," he conceded, shrugging. He held his arms out for her. "Hug it out?"
"Fuck yeah." She squeezed him tight, always finding kindness with her brother; he was the one truly good person she knew.

"Miss Cornish."

Her blood boiled in an instant when she heard that drawl, that easy, gruff tone. She pulled from her sibling to see him keeping an even distance, just close enough to catch her attention. His expression unreadable, she tried to put on her best, most neutral smile.

"What can I do for you, teach?" She asked as she ground her teeth quietly.

"Was wondering if you wouldn't mind coming to my office. Few things to discuss about our Fang here," Eric was granted that dimpled grin, bashful at his Coach's praise. "Mind if I borrow her, kid? Just a quick chat."

How was he so comfortable letting lies fly from his lips? *'He practiced on you, moron.' That inner voice of hers was savage.

"Of course, yeah; I think Holly is waiting anyway," he blushed, waving to a blond girl down by the sidelines; Delle wondered if it was the same girl from the track meet. How much had Negan made her miss? "I'll see her to her car. Think you'll survive without me, Delle?"

She grit her teeth so hard she thought they'd crack. "Absolutely." The young athlete was off in a flash, eager for his date; while she stared daggers into his mentor.

"Delle--"

"What the fuck do you want from me, Negan?" She hissed in a loud whisper, his head darting around to look for any bystanders.

"To shut the fuck up, for one," he said lowly, his voice thunderous and deep. "Secondly, can we actually talk in my office? Give me a chance to explain myself."

For some unknown reason, she nodded; walking an all too worn path to his secluded office. She swore to herself over and over she wouldn't let her demons get the best of her again; she would be good.

Chapter End Notes

So what do we think? How is Delle handling things?

Comments keep me writing faster so please drop me a line if you like this!

(Lolimsoloney)
Chapter 21

Finally back at Sanctuary, Delle split from Negan as quickly as she could. The closeness of the past two days had been difficult; as sweet and familiar it was to be near him again, the cuts from years past ached with it. She was back at her room as quick as her feet would carry her, finally in solitude.

She'd already broken a rule; her hands clutched at Fang, unwilling to allow him back into that weapons cache lest Jared's grubby digits find him again.

"I've gotcha now," she whispered, hugging it close while sheathed. "Nobody's gonna go touching you again."

The only space she could think to hide him was under her bed; the drawers were too empty to obscure with clothes, anywhere else equally vacant. Carefully, she lifted her mattress and slotted Fang between the frame; she hoped Negan wasn't one for regular room inspection. With this action, Delle realized something; she had nothing to do.

There was no camp to protect, no dead to kill, she'd received no orders for the remainder of the day; she had free time for the first time in years. Her eyes skimmed her door, wondering how safe her privacy would be if she ventured outside. *Nobody knows he's here, Delle; go and see what your new home is like,* her conscience was right, and with a change of her clothes she was out the door.

The red sweater Simon had procured her still rode up at her waist; and the only other set of pants she'd been allowed had been a set of baggy cargo fatigues, nearly black. The resulting look left her middle nearly bare, but the glare that came along with staring at her meant very few people did. She was beginning to learn the hallways; making note of ceiling damage, the way certain light bulbs flickered. They acted as markers in otherwise identical walkways, along with a helpful word from an armed guard now and then. The exploring lead her to the grand hall Negan had showed off during his personal tour, the place just as lively as she'd seen it before. She hoped she wasn't crossing lines by entering, by weaving through the masses, but her curiosity was blazing and she wanted to see how he ran things for the little people.

Again, her outfit drew stares, but she didn't care to notice as she found herself in what could only be described as a makeshift market, folding tables lined with everything from tools to useless knick knacks. It almost felt like a rummage sale, as she explored the assortment, wondering what use anyone would have in a curling iron or a plastic pumpkin in this day and age. She stopped dead in her tracks when she reached the clothing piles, a distinctive grey gym shirt standing out from the mishmash of items; it took some tugging to wedge it free, the logo was faded, but she had to have it.

She looked around for whoever was manning the stacks of items, deciding the older woman with the clipboard would be the one to talk to.

"Hi, 'scuse me?" She gave a little wave, the shirt clutched under her arm. "I'm new here, what do I have to do to take this home?"

The woman - nearing her 50s and looking excessively pissed off - looked at Delle then down at her clipboard. "Name please."
"Uh, Delle. Delle Co--"

"Delle's fine," the woman replied, flicking through the pages in front of her; she ceased on what appeared to be the last page, pausing with a look of confusion. Whatever was written there proved to be beneficial as the woman looked back up with a small smile. "All yours; take it."

She blinked with some reservation, wondering what had been scrawled there; she chose not to press it, happy with her purchase. "Thanks," She gave a nod, holding the shirt close. "Hey could you tell me where I can rustle up some grub 'round here? I'm fuckin' famished."

"They should be serving a meal up in the Saviors' quarters in an hour or so," the woman gave her a perplexed expression. "Better than anything you'll find out here."

She weighed her options; whatever slop they fed the dirty huddled masses in the factory, or fresh food with Negan. "Nah I'll eat down here; don't want to spoil my tongue."

Again she was given a funny look, but was pointed in the direction of a store of food; if it was canned, powdered, or dried they seemed to have it. She chuckled as she picked up a box from a shelf, catching the attention of the man working the pantry.

"Anyone ever try this? Dehydrated jellyfish?" She held it up with an easy smile. "What would this even taste like?"

The man gave a nervous laugh and shrugged. "I-I wouldn't be able to guess. It's just been collecting dust."

"Well that for sure ain't for me," she declared, setting it back in its place. After a bit more perusing, she found a favourite; canned peaches. "Oh fuck me sideways! I haven't had these since I was a kid. How much?" She held up two cans.

He looked over a similar list, that same confused look finding him. "Oh um... you have 'em. All taken care of."

"What?"

The man shied before holding out his list, her eyes finding her name quickly, as well as the note next to it.

**DELLE - SAVIOR - GIVE HER WHATEVER THE HELL SHE WANTS**

Her lips bunched and brow furrowed, recognizing Negan's distinctive writing. "Fucking hell," she sighed, staring upwardly to an unknown deity who was no doubt laughing at her. "Thanks," she grumbled, taking a moment to grab a can of tuna. "I'll take this too."

There were rows of tables strewn across the factory floor, under the light of the industrial windows; it very nearly brought her back to high school. She wasn't much for conversation with anyone at the moment, still fuming at Negan's attempts to coddle her. 'Points my ass,' she stormed inwardly, stamping past the busier tables; a particular scene in the corner, however, caught her attention. A group of three people, two women and a man, we're hunched into a corner, the short haired woman dipped over the surface as the long haired one rubbed her back. Even from where Delle stood, she
looked sickly; pale, maybe even shivering.

"She doesn't look so hot." Delle found herself saying as she walked to them, catching the attention of the healthy pair.

"She's been better," the woman replied, wiping some sweat from her companion's brow. "Her blood sugar is dangerously low right now..." there was anguish in her voice; the younger woman barely had to energy to peer up at Delle, her eyes glassy.

"Oh! Then here," Delle slid one of her cans of peaches across to the young woman, giving an easy smile. "Have this. Tons of sugars in that, right?"

They looked at her, baffled. With cautious fingers the long haired woman reached for the can, slotting her finger through the pull tab and opening it up. "T-thank you." The way she said the words sounded almost foreign as she helped her friend eat, tipping the can to have her drink the sickly sweet syrup it was packaged in.

"No worries; hope she feels better." She went to leave but the man rose from his seat; he was tall, skinny, with stringy blond hair.

"My name's Dwight," he extended a hand to her, a look of gratitude on his features. "This is my wife, Sherry; and her sister Tina. We... thank you." He seemed to relax as she shook his hand.

"Call me Delle." She replied, taking a seat with the trio. The young woman - Tina - already seemed to be coming around, her cheeks beginning to pink up.

"It's good to meet you," Sherry offered, tucking a hair behind her ear; she had a few years on Delle but she was gorgeous. "Thank you for sharing with us; it's been hard getting set up here."

"I'm not one to leave somebody in pain," Delle smiled. She gave a jerk of her head towards Tina. "Is she diabetic?"

"Yeah," Sherry nodded. "It's been tricky, getting all the points together for insulin... so far we've been managing."

"Just hadn't eaten in a few days." Tina piped up, strength starting to return. While Sherry was gorgeous, Tina had a youthful beauty to her, now that she wasn't actively dying.

"Well fuck that then. If I can help again tell me. In fact, here," she cracked open the second can as well as her tuna, setting it between the four of them. "Have at it. We'll share."

The three stared, unsure of the kindness the woman offered; but as she sank her fingers in to fetch a hunk of tuna, they followed suit. It wasn't much, but it was more than they had.

"Oy, Miss Twisted!" Delle whipped around, laying eyes on a familiar mustache and grin. "What brings you down here?"

"Just gettin' some face time with my fellow citizens," she smiled up at him, those dark eyes boring down at her. "Don't tell me that's against the fuckin' rules too?"

"Not at all, beautiful," he calmed her concern, if there was any. "Wondering if you'd be open to a quick walk. I'll make it worth your while."
"Oh? And how will you do that?"

"You'll be spending time with me; how's that not a treat?"

With a sarcastic laugh she turned back to her new friends, a distinctive change in tension between them now. "Mind if I go keep this one company?"

Only Dwight was able to respond, with a nod and a smile as the two sisters look on in fear at the second in command of the Sanctuary. Delle made note of it as she stood, gathering up her newly proffered shirt.

"Good meeting you. I'll see you 'round," she turned to Simon, threading an arm through his and squeezing his bicep. "Shall we, beanstalk?"

"Gladly, my little psycho."

Chapter End Notes

So happy to hear from some Simon fans last chapter :D so much love for that mustachioed maniac.

So here's our rough time line of where we are in the storage :3 if you like where this is going, please leave me a comment! Im motivated to write quicker and I can use all the help I can get :p

❤❤❤❤
"Delle," alone in his office, he was leant against his desk like he was giving a lecture. With her back remained glued to the heavy wood door as he began. "First off... I am so fuckin’ sorry."

She stared at him outright, biting her tongue to let him continue; she was hoping to get out of this without saying a word.

At her silence, he continued. "I'm a fucking asshole, I know. I can't really explain why I did what I did..."

'Because we wanted to... we wanted to see how it'd feel...'

"I never wanted to see you hurt. I just... you do something to me, Delle." Her face contorted with his last statement, hands balling up into fists.

"Oh this is on me? I do something to you!??" She scoffed, her eyes narrow slits on him. "You're fucking married! I mean I know I flirted with you, that's on me, but where's your fucking ring!??" She glanced to his hand, his bare finger. "Where is it now!??"

He glanced down; in truth it was tucked in his desk, where he left it more often than not. Some nights he'd forget to wear it home; though Lucille never noticed.

"I'm... I don't feel right wearing it anymore." He confessed, those deep, beckoning eyes meeting hers.

"And you fucking shouldn't! I mean your--your wife," her voice nearly cracked saying it out loud. "You don't deserve to wear it! She must've been crushed."

"That's not why I don't wear it," he mumbled, pushing off from the desk, back to his full height. "And I... she doesn't know."

She couldn't believe her ears; how had she let this man inside of her so many times!? 'You know how.' "You haven't fucking told her? What... why would you even do that? How can you do that to someone you love!??"

It was the first time since it'd all started that Negan had heard that; and now he wondered if there was love left at all. He'd say it, yes, but it didn't feel the same. The way the words left his lips felt empty, like it fell on Lucille's deaf ears. No, if there was love left in him... it wasn't for her anymore.

"I don't think she even cares. Think I'm goddamn window dressing at this point." he shook his head with a cross of his arms. All his bitching earned him was a look of furious shock.
"I can't believe you. All these years I thought you were some pious fucking stick in the mud with all your regulations and bullshit. I have never been so wrong in my whole damn life; you're as twisted as everyone else, Negan. If anything you're worse!"

He listened to her daggered words in silence, knowing he deserved every stabbing pang.

"All those times I put a toe out of line and you freaked the fuck out, now look at you! I'm fundamentally fucked up for getting with my gym teacher but you," she tossed her hands in his direction, disbelief coating every movement. "You're morally repre-fucking-hensible!"

"I'm not exactly fucking proud of myself, Delle!" His temper flared, eyes getting darker. "Like I said, I can't goddamn explain it; but when I fucking saw you on the field that day I had to fucking have you. Like you flicked a goddamn switch inside me."

She knew the day he was talking about; she'd come running up to him in her sportwear, hair out and cascading, maybe a little sexier than usual. She couldn't tell him that run in had been accidental on purpose, that the plan was to catch his eye -- but she wouldn't have done anything if she knew he was spoken for!

Right?

"Fucking christ now who's all poetic?" She snorted with a cross of her arms. "I cannot even fucking imagine how that poor woman is gonna react. Like shit, how do you goddamn rationalize--"

"Can we shut the hell up about her!?" Mention of Lucille was beginning to rub him the wrong way; taking him away from the point of bringing Delle down to talk. "I don't fucking care about her, I'm here for you aren't I!"

Delle's eyes widened slow, struggling with her words. How could he talk about his wife that way; moreover, why did she find herself tingling when he did?

'Fuck,' she worried. 'I let feelings in. Shit.'

"Goddamn it... I never fucking asked for all this!" She let her eyes find the ceiling, exasperated. "All I wanted was to fuck my ex teacher, I didn't want this... this fucking mess!" Her hands covered her face, more out of embarassment than anything else.

Maybe this was his way in. "Well... what if we subtracted the mess?" He pondered, watching her react.

"What the fuck do you mean?"

"I mean forget about everything else; when we're together, it is the hottest fucking shit," he couldn't help a smirk with how her skin pinked in response. "What if we were just that? Just two bodies, fucking, getting off," he took a step she didn't notice. "Because fuck, Delle; nothin' has ever made me as fucking hard as you do. Let me earn that forgiveness the best way I know how..."

It wasn't flattery she was feeling; that couldn't have been it. Negan was risking everything for the simple chance to be with her again, breaking every rule he held sacred. It shocked her that he could relinquish his commandments so easily.

She was shocked by how much she liked it.
"Delle?" When had he got so close to her? They were barely a foot apart now, and she could just see his fingers twitching at his sides; the look in his eyes was one she was used to now, but it was guarded. What was he expecting to happen here?

"W-what the hell are you doing?" She asked quickly, strung together like it was all one word.

"I was askin' if you could forgive an old dog like me," that smile still set off a reaction in her as well, chemical and primal. "I never meant for you to get hurt. Honest to God, I just..." His eyes slowly dared to slide down her body before retracing their steps to her lips. It was a sign she'd grown accustomed to; he needed her, even their conversation wasn't halting his desire. She didn't dare look down, knowing his hunger would be apparent against his jeans, scared it might push her over the edge herself. She didn't want to admit it but her body still responding to him, the heat between her legs unquestionable.

"Stop, Delle; you said you'd be good!"

"...why...why don't you wear it anymore?" She asked quietly, eyes stuck on his face. The question drew up his gaze to hers, eyebrows up turning slightly.

"Because I don't feel married anymore," he said simply, subtracting a few inches from their gap. "See there's this little shit who I can't stop thinking about... she's like a goddamn drug," a few inches less, fingertips threatening her thighs. "Far as I'm concerned, I was a lost cause the second she ran up to me."

Her cheeks blazed with a blush he was sure continued down, under her collar; her lips were redder too, maybe a bit puffier in thrill.

"We... we can't keep doing this," she tried to sound firm but only sounded tortured, all her power devoted to keeping her hands off; a sentiment he didn't share. "I'm... I don't want to be some whore for you. Some teen slot to slip your dick in."

"You aren't," he rasped, his hands pressing against the door, dipping his head to graze her hair, take in her scent. "You're my good girl."

He felt her body shudder as she released a whimper, felt her fingers entwine in his tshirt to keep her steady. It brought a wicked grin to his face; the devil in him was in control now, and he wouldn't have had it any other way.

"Fuck, Coach..." she groaned as his lips slid down her neck. She knew every action was wrong, every sin was damming, but she was drowning in it willingly. She knew she could make him stop, knew she could drive her knee up into his balls and send him off with his tail between his legs; but she didn't. She didn't want to. "I don't even know who I am around you..."

"I do," he growled, his hands moving from the door to her sides, winding up and down her hips as he pressed his against her. "You're Delle... that little demon I can't get enough of."

She shivered as he palmed her backside with both hands, pulling her against his push. "We... Negan we shouldn't -- ohh..." His teeth bit down into the crook of her neck, hitting just the right spot.

"Tell me to stop," his lips, teeth and tongue were a flurry between his whispers, forcing every possible moan out of her as he thrusted into her clothed hips, confident now that she wanted him
despite her fury. "Tell me to stop and I will."

'Shove him away! Tell him you never want to see him again! Do SOMETHING to stop him!' Her better angel might as well have been dead and gone as her arms wrapped around his back, one hand tangling his hair to push him in tighter. "Fuck, Negan -- I..."

A loud pounding against the door ceased any and all action, Negan practically leaping from her grasp as her heart skipped a beat. "Coach? You there?"

"What in God's green fuck is Eric still doing here!?!" He snarled low, combing his hair back with his fingers; she was doing the same, readjusting her clothes.

"Fuck if I know, teach," the door sounded again as she stepped away, setting up a scene as she sat in the chair he kept in front of his desk. "I'd answer it if I were you."

He looked down, relieved to see his erection had decreased; the prospect of being caught had put a serious damper on his mood. He swung the door open, stare hard on the younger Cornish.

"Y'okay, Fang? Forget something?" He asked, trying to keep up his most professional tone.

"Just thought I'd see if Delle could use some company on the way home. How 'bout it sis?" He looked over at his sister, totally unaware of the events that had just transpired.

"Fuckin' A, Fang." She winked, giving him a truer grin than he'd seen in weeks. He lit up, uncaring of what could've caused it.

"Language, Miss Cornish." Negan offered her that same grin; it sent a chill up her spine, one she thought she'd despise. She responded with an eye roll, moving for the door.

"Did ya'll have a good talk?" Eric prompted, looking expectantly from his sister to his mentor. They'd almost completely forgotten the pretense for their little meeting. "Hope my grades are okay!"

"Oh, flyin' colors, Fang," Negan clapped his paw on the boy's shoulder. "Just askin' Delle if she'd mind being a chaperone for our away game next weekend; Mr.Sanderson dropped out," she raised her brows at him, this being the first she'd heard of it. "Gotta keep you kids in line. What do you say Delle?" He mirrored her expression, waiting for an answer to the abrupt question.

A weekend's worth of trying to keep herself from jumping his bones? "Count me in, Coach. I'll be there with bells on."

Chapter End Notes

I struggled with whether this chapter should be a flashback or continue with the "present"... how're you guys feeling about it?

Comments help me write faster, sends me all the love♡♡♡♡
Chapter 23

Chapter Notes

Long chapter! Character movement! A wife!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Simon proved fine company, walking her through to the back of the campus, displaying a minor patch of greenery, even some half lively trees inside the fences. It didn't take more than 5 minutes to walk the surrounding perimeter, so they sat down, enjoying a surprisingly sunny day for the season.

"Gonna start gettin' colder soon," she stated as she laid against the grass, her hands pillowing her head. "Can feel it in my fuckin' bones."

"Days are gettin' shorter too," He agreed, leaning his forearms against bent knees. "You did good work on that run, by the way."

"Awe thanks, you big softie," she grinned as he looked back at her with a raised brow. "Pretty sure Negan had a mind to string me up by my ears."

"You did run your mouth." He had a point. Delle said she'd try and as much of an effort as she'd made, she knew it wasn't enough. The new Negan was used to power in absolute, he wasn't questioned. She knew her nature was the antithesis of his ideal member.

"Yeah I know... my mouth got away from me." She shut her eyes, breathing in and trying to ignore the stink of the dead the air always held.

"Funny though..." he spoke slowly. "Anyone else disobeying him like that would've had their brains bashed in... but not you." Her eyes opened to see him looking at her seriously, studying her.

"What's your point?" She was wary of his answer; Simon seemed bright, and she wondered if she'd been too familiar with Negan already. 'You can't have spoiled this so quickly, fuckwad!'

"Just wondering why he hasn't done you in yet; you're swimmin' in luck, gorgeous." He let himself lean back against the grass, cupping his head in his hand to keep his stare above her.

She'd dealt with folks asking questions about her and Negan in the past; she found cold irony in the fact she stood to lose more now that they weren't doing anything. "I don't know," she pasted a confident grin on her face. "Probably wants a chance in my pants or some shit."

He laughed, rolling to his back. "Like I told you, the man has his ways," his demeanour stiffened, remembering his reason for calling her away. "Hey Delle?"

"Yeah?"

"Where'd you stow that machete of yours?" She froze as he asked, knowing those dark eyes were on her again. "If you tell me I can probably sneak it back without any trouble."
She turned her head and gave him a pleading look, one of desperation. "I'm not putting him back in that weapons heap, Simon; not where that dickless moron Jared could go rusting him." She couldn't bear the thought of that grease stain holding her Fang again.

Simon pressed his thumb and forefinger to the bridge of his nose, stuck between a grumble and a sigh. "If you get caught with it on you, you're not gonna like what happens." He warned; though given Negan's treatment of her so far, he could wake to the blade in his back and would give her a gold star for aim.

"I'll keep him safe then," she decided with a nod; no better person than her to do so. "It'll be alright, I can keep my shit handled." A breeze blew through the grounds, now thankful that she'd slipped on her newest apparel; it offered a little extra coverage.

"You know I can't go to the mat for you if they catch you; you're on your own." She was annoyed by his pestering; this didn't feel like the Simon who'd captured her, he was being a mollycoddle.

"Would you stop, Si? If I get in shit for it I won't drag you down with me," she held up 3 fingers. "Scout's honor."

He scoffed as his body relaxed, soaking in sunlight and his brief moments of peace. "You were never a scout."

"Well isn't this a pretty fucking picture?" They turned in unison to see their leader hovering over them like a storm cloud. His hand was so tight around Lucille they could almost hear wood crack.

"Hey boss," Simon stood from his place, bowing his head respectfully to Negan. "Where do you need me?" He was used to him having set orders whenever he sought him out. Their system worked and well because of their rapport; but the way Negan stared at him now was as if he'd found his hand in the cookie jar.

"I need you anywhere but fucking here, Simon," he gave him a monstrous grin, hand heavy on his second lieutenant's shoulder. It was a classic scare tactic, one Simon had seen before, but something about this time felt different; this time, he felt threatened. "Think you can wrap your mind around that?"

He knew it had to be something to do with Delle; Negan didn't want anyone else near her, seemingly no one with a cock. With a slow nod he obeyed, bidding Delle goodbye. It would be something to discuss at another time.

"What was that?" Delle asked, pulling herself to a seated place. "I can't even talk to other men now?"

"Not the ones who want in your pants." He replied declaritively, tilting his chin up and away from her. She couldn't believe his temper, acting like a jealous teenage boy; not that she wasn't similar once upon a time.

"So I guess that knocks you out of the running then too." She muttered, bringing herself to her feet. She suppressed a shiver when she moved to leave and he stopped her, catching the hem of her new top in his grip. She glanced down then back to him, the same look of nostalgia on his face as she'd felt when she found it.

"Go Timberwolves," he chuckled, letting his hand trace up the logo the shirt sported, a snarling wolf
over the bold letters of 'athletics department'. How it had wound up in his world he had no idea, but the sight of it brought him back to when last he'd seen her in such a uniform; mismatched with a black skirt, glowing after an after school tryst. "Feelin' homesick, darlin'?"

She wrenched his grip from the material, hearing a few stitches tear. "Just like it is all." She muttered through a glowering gaze.

He rolled his eyes as his body dipped back, swinging Lucille to his side. "Just you and me out here now, sugar," he ran his spare hand down her arm, his fingers dwindling with hers a few seconds too long. "Want me to make you drop n' gimme twenty?"

She wished she could give into his charms, find funny what she'd found hilarious before; but the lines between his public and private personalities were drastically skewed. "You're really fucking with my head, geezer," she admitted silently, keeping her voice low in case the ears of unseen spies were listening. "How am I supposed to know when I can tease you or when I'm poking a bear?"

"Simple, Delle; just take a look around and ask yourself 'is there anyone else here?'," he grinned at his so-called simple solution, tapping Lucille against the toe of his boot. "If we're all by our lonesome, you bust these balls just the way I like." He punctuated his explanation with a grasp of his groin, looking heftier than average.

With that she leant in close, closer than he was expecting; he could see the light shining off her bright eyes, sceptic and pained. "Those balls will go unbusted then; you're never alone." Was all she said, swirling from his presence as the wind picked up, chilling him through his leathers and into his bones.

Negan was infuriated; he hadn't felt so powerless in years. 'Not since the cancer unit...' He shook the memory quickly, not wanting to dwell on that time any second longer than he had to.

"She just walked the fuck away," he growled to himself, noting the mission's spoils in one of many ledgers that helped to keep the Sanctuary growing. "Little bitch thinks she has me in a corner, fuck..." His demons were just as angry; when at one time he could've pressed her to a wall and had her in seconds, now she was unattainable and righteous. 'She does have you in a corner,' they reasoned. 'It's up to you to push back.'

He glanced up when he heard a thump against his door, light and reluctant. A heavy sigh accompanied him to answer it, a tense redhead in a black dress on the other side.

"Frankie," he muttered, leaning into the frame of the door. "What's my girl need?"

Frankie had been the second woman he'd married. He'd chosen her because he remembered ginger girls in his youth being wild in the sack; Frankie proved that myth wrong.

"I-Its my night," she replied, casting her eyes downward; the current rotating roster and her position in the wives' hierarchy meant she had to spend at least two nights a week with him. It wasn't exactly a highlight. "I-If it's too early, I can come back..."

"Not at all, darlin'," he moved from his place, allowing her entry to his room; he preferred to keep the
ledgers in his personal quarters, feeling safer. His desk sat adjacent to a wide bed, four-postered and firm, dark linens spanning it; his wife, now practiced in his practices, moved to the mattress. "Make yourself comfortable."

She took in a shaky breath; Negan wasn't unattractive, nor did he feel accomplished if his mate didn't 'get there', but there was no love in her for him. Their marriage, like his others, was more of a business arrangement than anything else. In exchange for her, she was well off enough in Sanctuary to not set foot outside again; the last thing she wanted. She removed her uniform dress slowly, tacky and dramatic lingerie underneath; just as he demanded. She let herself crawl across his bedspread, lying against the pillows on her back, eyes facing the ceiling. It felt more like an exam than a romantic coupling.

Negan went through the motions, what he'd been used to since he'd decided to marry again (and again and again). Stripping free of his usual tee, slipping off his boots and denim, he moved over his second wife, looking into her face, knowing very well she wouldn't meet his eyes.

'Delle would,' his devils were back at it again, prodding him. 'Delle would stare right into your soul, she wouldn't fake it either. Why aren't you calling for her?' "Fuck," he groaned, letting his hands slid down her ribs to her hips, Frankie's skin rising with goosebumps; he knew they were resulted from fear, not excitement. 'Fuck the woman who wants to fuck you; she'll leave you feeling like a man again,' he tried to push her dark hair from his mind in favor of the red hair that splayed out before him.

Frankie noticed the change; by now she'd normally be wincing, yelping as he forced himself inside her over and over, silent but for a few snarls against her shoulder. The way he was touching her, the look on his face when she dared to peek; he was somewhere else entirely.

"Damn it." He grumbled, pushing himself up and off the bed, restoring his shirt and pants. Delle had him under a spell; a gorgeous woman laid submissive across his bed and he wasn't even hard.

"N-Negan?" She asked, nervous of what he might be planning.

"Too much on my mind tonight, doll," he didn't bother looking at her as he sank back into the chair at his desk, feeling defeated. "Think you can use those magic fingers on me?"

In her previous life, Frankie had been a massage therapist; whenever he asked for her 'magic fingers' she'd taken it to mean he was more stressed than usual. She redressed, making her way to her husband and sinking her fingertips into the muscles of his neck and shoulders; sure enough, there were monstrous tension knots built up. He released a long breath as she began the work at his stress points.

"Mm fuck this is almost as good as sex." He chuckled, his eyes closing as his wife rubbed out all the stresses that came with Delle Cornish. He hated that she was there as much as he'd never let her go, hated that her existence was keeping him from his everyday life, hated that she wouldn't let him protect her; she was as frustrating and complicated as she'd ever been, and as was always the case it only drew him further entangled into her.

Frankie gave a smile he didn't see, relief washing over her that she didn't have to submit to him that night; though an underlay of confusion as to why plagued her. She and her fellow wives lived in comfort in exchange for their servitude; if he no longer needed them, where would they go? She shook it from her mind, certain it was truly just an off day, choosing to believe she'd simply found luck in her situation.
In the same instance Delle paced her cramped room, her body feeling like a knot of frustration through and through. She couldn't begin to comprehend what he wanted; the version of her he'd been so entranced with once had grown up, and even now her current self was disruptive to his empire. He wanted total subservience; except for singular moments where she could be herself. How she was meant to decipher when he wanted that and in what severity she had no idea, and doubted she'd receive any guidance from him.

He was maddening; just as he was then, but in new, lethal ways. When her sharp tongue had once seen her punished in the best ways, she was now at risk of literal prison time for the same barbs and sneers. On top of her confusion and vexation, her body - and parts of her heart - still shrieked for him, setting off reactions she couldn't undo and hoped he didn't notice. It couldn't have been more angering.

She was yanked from her storm of irritation by a light rapping on her door; by the gentility of it, it couldn't have been Negan. Instead she found Simon standing in her doorway, leant casually with a bottle of whiskey and two smudged glasses in hand.

"How'd I know I'd find you fuming," he chuckled, her brows still knit and chest heaving with angry breath. "What's got your panties in a knot, Twisted?"

"Fucking Negan." She snarled as she allowed him in, her foot bouncing impatiently as she leant against her wall.

He gave a knowing smile and set the glasses down on her dresser, uncapping the bottle. "Yep, he does have that effect on some." He admitted as he doled out two generous portions of brown liquor.

"How does anyone deal with that fucking asswad? He's insufferable!" At the moment, she meant it.

"This helps," he replied, handing her a glass. He tapped it with his own and raised it in cheer. "To fucking Negan."

She grimaced but did the same, toasting her glass and drinking her portion in one go. "Fucking Negan."

Chapter End Notes

Phew, sorry about the length here guys; I'm kind of playing catch up with my flashbacks, it's proving challenging.

If you like what yu read this round please comment! Helps me write faster and inspires me ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 24

Chapter Notes

Whatcha tryin' to pull, Negan?

This one turned out way longer than intended, but I think it's worth it to further the characters :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It became routine; Delle would so often find her nights ending with a drink and ranting over Negan's latest ridiculousness to Simon. His were kind ears and gentle words, and no matter how their mutual boss had irked her that day, Simon would always leave her smiling.

Negan hadn't allowed her from his sight on runs, would regularly parade her out amongst his communities as his 'ballsy little femme fatale'. She was still grateful that she could carry Fang in her grip, but the wrong move could have him pulled from her in an instant; so she remained solemn and silent. It seemed to work in concert with the character he'd made up. The way he ran things was domineering, but effective. Lesser communities bowed to his rule, iron fisted and tyrannical, and in exchange they were allowed to go on living. 'This is my goddamn world, and you will earn your places in it!' She couldn't help but admit it impressed her. The man he was now was the only one she could imagine holding such power. He was a demon, a monster; but she admired that monster nonetheless. He'd never hear about it from her though, her stoicism solid and unwavering on each silent ride, her place now fixed next to him in his truck. She'd remain stark still with his arm around her shoulders, cloaking her like a yolk; she tried to guess why he hadn't tried more.

It was after yet another run, yet another round of showboating and bravado, that he stopped her on her way back to her room, eager for another drink with Simon. "Not so fast, little miss Delle," he snickered, Lucille dripping at his shoulder; he'd had to flex a little muscle that day. Someone had misbehaved. "You drew the short straw; night watch duty tonight." She frowned, but gave a nod. 'Don't argue, things are bearable right now'

"Alright. I'll be there." His arm slammed into the wall, stopping her in her tracks.

"Best get a little shut eye first, sweetheart," he let his face dip close to hers, dark eyes on bright. "Don't want you nodding off on the job."

Her expression didn't waver, though her mind worried if he knew about her nights with Simon. Platonic though they were, she doubted they'd remain so for much longer. She took a careful survey of their surroundings, seemingly deserted; now was a safe moment. "Not to worry Negan. You know very well I can go all night."

He hardened instantaneously but made no motion to grab her as he might've once, instead letting her continue on her way. 'You get everything else under the damn sun you want,' his conscience advised. 'You can be patient for now.'

She was hesitant to turn Simon away, but turn him away she did when he came knocking. She was happy to grant him a quick view of her sleep wear; that old gym shirt and black panties, her hips...
swaying just a little bit more than usual as she her door shut to him, retreating back to her bed. Negan still invaded her dreams, yes, but every so often a vision of Simon would break through as well... the two of them working in tandem was an unspeakable delight, and an impossible one anywhere but in her dreams. Her mind recalled Negan's expertise vividly and recreated it perfectly, while her imagination would flit between what kind of a lover Simon would be; gentle, loving, generous, forceful, rough, vicious. She woke from such a dream just in time for her shift; barely enough time to switch out of slick panties and into warmer wear for a cold evening.

She took over Dwight's post on the highest roof of the Sanctuary; he'd been moving up since their first meeting. He and Sherry were still scrambling to keep up with Tina's insulin intake, being one of the pricier items of the Sanctuary, but they worked as hard as they could, their family dynamic sweet and inspiring.

"Cold night, Delle," he greeted with a wave, handing off the regulation AR-15 to her for her share of the watch. "Hope you're bundled."

"As bundled as I can get," she shivered with a frigid gust. She expected snows would hit soon. "Fuck it's colder than a witch's cunt up here."

With a laugh Dwight unwrapped a threadbare scarf from his neck, extending it out to her. "Here, a loaner," she thanked him and wrapped it around her neck, still holding some of his heat. "Hopefully you don't freeze to death."

The little family had become good friends for her as of late. There was no rule against sharing what was hers, despite the nonsense that didn't allow her to use her own points for Tina's insulin. She saw to them eating at least, keeping them strong enough to keep working. She'd made Negan aware of as much, though he didn't seem to care so long as she stayed happy and yielding. It bordered on his much maligned special treatment, but she danced the line perfectly.

Despite the cold, it was a beautiful night. The sky was clear, and the light pollution from the lower levels didn't reach her there; she was bathed in moon and starlight, bright and shining in the dark. She paced the edge of the roof, eyes peeled for any sign of movement or attack in the surrounding forest; but like almost every other night, noone dared to pose a threat to their fortress. 'His fortress.' She corrected, eyes straying back to the heavens and imagining a different time and place. "You'd be shocked, Fang. To see all he's done."

"Would he?" She nearly fell from her spot as Negan's voice pervaded her space, climbing the last wrung of the only ladder to the roof; he was in full regalia, black denim and leathers with a shockingly red scarf at his throat. It brought out the whites in his beard, beautiful and contrasting his dimples.

She pushed her attraction from her mind, concerning himself with his statement; it was the first time since their reunion he'd even asked about her brother. "He'd be speechless." She said plainly, looking away.

"Awe, I'm sure I could get him on board. He would've been my right hand, given Simon a run for his money," he chuckled, his hand running over his beard; it was growing longer with the oncoming winter. "Could've used some unwavering loyalty in my ranks."

"Wound up with the rulebreaker instead. Poor you," She turned from him, continuing with her watchful march. "What are you even doing up here? Don't you have a wife to fuck?"
"Who said I didn't before I got here?" It stung and she damned herself for it. "Testing out a paired patrol idea. Wouldn't be right if I wasn't the first to try it out."

"Right."

There was an awkward pause momentarily as Negan found his place seated against a ventilation shaft, the moonlight casting his crisp shadow across the concrete. He was merely watching her grow increasingly uncomfortable.

"Shouldn't you be patrolling or some shit?" She finally asked, turning her head to his.

"I'm supervising."

With a roll of her eyes she stood still at the edge of the building, faking an engrossment with the way the treeline met the sky. Why did he have to come out tonight? Especially after that dream; so vivid she could practically feel that stubble gracing her thighs...

"You used to love nights like this," There was a gentility in his tone, undercut by his gruff baritone. She found herself turning to him again, eyes wandering his face. She couldn't recognize the emotion it wore.

"Still do," she shrugged, hoisting her gun up her shoulder. "Quiet, clear. Can actually hear myself think, most of the time." She raised a brow to him with a smirk and his heart skipped a beat.

"No shortage of these now," his stare wandered up to the stars and she wondered what he might've been imagining. "All the time in the world to think."

"Yep... thinkin' about Eric most nights," She dared to step a little closer to him, sharing a their memories of her brother. "He thought you were a god, you know."

"Oh I remember; he was a great goddamn kid," his chest rumbled with low laughter, his head shaking. "Too bad he had that fucking nightmare of a sister." This felt like the Negan she'd known; his words held a heaps of remembrance, sharp but sweet.

"Oh yeah, I hear she was a fucking bitch," she lengthened the word for effect, dipping her body back in his now signature lean. "Never could reign that one in could ya, you fucking geezer?" She was grinning now, giggles in her throat.

"She was nuts! I had to get real creative in her punishments..." there was that dark, lusty tone again; she knew what he was inferring, but took it in another direction.

"D'you remember the one time I tied all the cleats in the storage shed together before one of your games," she'd had enough of the third person shit. "And you had me on laps and suicides while singing the school song til 10 pm?"

He grinned wide, slapping his knee; it was a fond one for him. "You could barely squeak out the words by the end of it, you were so hoarse," his eyes found hers again, admiration in them. "But damn if you didn't hold out."

"You're damn right. Delle Cornish doesn't back down." She was leant against a radiator adjacent to his place now; it felt natural, human to be talking to him like this.
"Boy don't I know it," his head cocked to one side, brows raising at her. "Do you still remember it?"

"What?"

"That damn anthem, sweetheart."

She beamed and threw her head back, reciting off key and as loud as she could:

We're the mighty Timberwolves!
We're strongest as a pack!
We're the mighty Timberwolves!
We have each other's back!

Timberwolves, Timberwolves!
Howling at the moon!
Timberwolves, Timberwolves--

The last line of the song was always a long howl, loud and wild into the night; she did her best imitation, realizing Negan was howling along with her. As was school tradition, when you heard one Wolf howling, you had to join in. They both convulsed into laughter, the absurd and outdated song was terrible but remembered in warmth.

"That stupid fuckin' song," she sighed, wiping away little tears of hilarity. "Goddamn... I hated that school."

"I know," he smiled softly, chest rising as his chuckles subsided. "At least the staff was alright."

As if waiting in the wings of their little scene, an ice cold wind blew across the roof, a chill worming its way deep through her bones. "Fuck!" She exclaimed, her arms curving around her body trying to hold onto her heat.

"C'mere," he ordered, pulling his fingers in a come hither motion as his legs spread, bending at his knees to offer her a place. Her body locked up quickly, staring at him as if he'd offered her a poison apple. "You're fuckin' cold, get over here before I send you off the roof in a swan damn dive."

She pouted but made her way to his waiting grasp, facing away from him with her legs pressed tight together to avoid touching his; as she laid her weapon aside his long arms snaked around her torso and pulled her flush against him. He radiated like a furnace, he'd always ran hot.

"Nice n' cozy," he hummed against her ear, eyes closing as he drank in the smell of her mane; clean but with an underlying scent of sweat, heat. "Last thing I need is you turning into a goddamn icy pop up here."

"Sure, okay," she rolled her eyes; as much as she didn't want to her body settled against his quickly, warm and familiar. It felt as if she'd just come home after a long trip, sitting there, huddled against the unforgiving night air. "I'm sure you do this for all your men."

"Just the ones I like," she could practically feel his Cheshire grin searing her skin as his body shook with a chuckle. She tried to withhold her shivering until a wind blew through again; he didn't need to think she was trembling over him. "Mind if I ask you somethin'?"

She craned her neck to meet his gaze, his expression strangely solemn. "Never stopped you before."
"How'd he go?" He said softly, so gently that if she hadn't seen the words leave his lips she'd have thought it was the sound of the wind. She quite suddenly felt crippling shy; about how he held her, being in his house, sharing with him her brother's final moments. She pulled her lips inward, mouth forming a thin line as her head turned from his again. Negan might've been the last person on earth besides herself who had known Eric, who'd loved him; of course he'd want to hear about him. But she wasn't sure she was willing to talk. Not yet.

"It... I don't want to talk about that." She said firmly, crossing her arms underneath his.

"That's fine. Another time." He'd yielded so quickly, her head snapping back round to look at him in uneasy surprise. It was a patient, forgiving action; and didn't feel like him at all.

"Not feelin' pushy tonight, boss?" She teased, though grateful he wasn't pressing further. The memory, though aging, always felt like a fresh cut seeping and mean.

"Oh feelin' plenty pushy," she couldn't hide her shudder that time as he rolled his hips up with his words, his desire blatantly apparent against her backside. "Just trying to give you what you want."

"Ha; you're Negan," she sighed, hoping the cold light of the moon offset the redness in her cheeks. "You don't give without getting something back."

"You've got that fuckin' straight," there was that darkness in his tone again, his lips barely grazing the shell of her ear. "I'm giving you what you want; so maybe you give me what I want."

He knew her buttons well, heat in her skin bubbling and annoying. She hadn't noticed how his fingers were massaging at her shoulder and waist, how tight his arms were around her now, how deliberate his deep breaths were; suddenly all of it was clear. Half wanted to run, half wanted to stay.

"We were just talkin' about a dead kid," it hurt to say those words but she thought it might distract him some, deflate his size a bit; but she felt no change. "It's fucked up that you're so hard."

"I'm fucked up, Delle," he growled; oh the way his voice rolled in his throat always shook her foundations. She nearly bit through her lip to keep from acting. "It's fucked up that you're so hard."

"I'm fucked up, Delle," he growled; oh the way his voice rolled in his throat always shook her foundations. She nearly bit through her lip to keep from acting. "Just as much as you are."

"What... what is it you want?" She dared asking, her eyes meeting his full on; his presence set off chemical reactions in her as well. She didn't know why she'd bothered asking, he wanted what he always did; she was more than adverse to stripping down in the freezing air though.

"I want you to remember," he murmured, the hand on her shoulder rising to her hair, tangling in a healthy handful. "I want you to remember how good I made you feel."

That did it. She jerked from his grip, sitting and staring into his face. "I remember everything, Negan; your bullshit put me through hell. What makes you think I want that again?"

"I can think of a few good reasons," he snickered, a wide hand grasping the bulge in his jeans. "We were royally fucked up, yeah -- but goddamn we were hot."

She had to give him that; even at their most ferocious the sex had been incredible; if anything it was hotter the more they'd fought. "I'm not some slave to carnal fucking urges, you fucking horndog."

"Oh, a new variant. "I didn't live this long just to become a sex doll!"

Her indignation was infuriating; downright disrespectful. "I never asked you to be!" He spat back
with indignation, his hard-on steadily decreasing. "I asked you to follow my rules, let me keep you safe for once in your damn life, you can't even let me have that!"

"I'm not some wounded bird, fuck! I don't need you to protect me!" Her teeth clenched as she lunged forward, grabbing his shoulders to shake. "I've never needed anyone's help and I'm sure as hell not going to start with you!"

He simply watched, his brows low and studying her rage. She was an open flame just as she'd always been; the way she seared his skin was addictive, but if he stoked her too far she could burn him alive. It was a delicate balance and he was rusty.

"Then don't," he breathed. "You've made it real goddamn clear you can stand on your own two legs; and I still want your hard ass on my team. But fuck," his hands ran down her back, heavy paws on her waist. "Let me do what I do best."

His mouth was on hers like lightning and she was back in that alley, that taste and sensation a time machine. His tongue was as deft as it always was, sneaking between her lips like a thief to steal her kiss. Her eyes shut and mouth opened out of habit, fingertips sinking into his leathers as she marvelled at the new sensation of lengthy whiskers and totally misguided entitlement. He felt too good, like a homecoming, a missed reunion. She was losing herself, years of built up desire controlling her as her teeth dragged across his tongue, his lip, gathering up every forgotten feeling as he growled into her actions. She groaned back in spite of herself, the cold falling away with everything else, the living corpses, his empire, his harem of wives; it was just him and just her, as it had always felt when he kissed her.

'But it's not just you now is it.'

She pushed away, the world flooding back in a rush of freezing fear. Her body vibrated with an even mixture of ardor and anger, watching his self satisfied grin. "Damn," he purred, dragging his thumb across his bottom lip. "You taste just like I remember."

She tossed her gun aside, finding her feet in a hurry. "This paired patrol thing is a terrible fucking idea," she hissed, hands balled tight. "You can do this by yourself."

"I think not," he mirrored her movements, retrieving the AR and thrusting it back into her hands. "My dick could cut steel right now, and if you're not obliging, I'm going t' see my wives," he grinned through what could wind up to be a lie; he wanted Delle, no matter which pussy he sank himself into he wanted her. 'Hers.' "Enjoy your night, sweetheart." He caught the back of her head, letting their lips brush once more before cackling on his leave, that deep voice rumbling away into the night.

She stared out across the empty roof, a clear night overcome by the storm of combative emotions within her. She felt him in her body, tasted him still on her tongue, but couldn't decipher what she held for him in her heart as she screamed bloody murder to the iridescent stars.

Chapter End Notes

Whoa long chapter :O congratulations to you for making it to the end!!

Did we like it? How'd Delle handle herself? Please leave a comment, they keep me
writing and inspired ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 25

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Before...

That hazy Saturday morning the school bus chugged it's way down the highways, raucous boys laughing and talking about their game. For a few of them it was the first time ever leaving their town. They whizzed past acres of empty space, farmland, industrial parks as their Coach rallied them from his front seat, Delle watching silently in the rear.

He had a way with the team, getting their blood up and excited; she guessed it might have been the same for her if she'd ever followed his rules. 'You've never followed rules, Delle,' her moral compass pointed due south. 'You're busting through dozens just by being here.' She knew it was true. She'd put herself in this situation, chillingly aware of Negan's marriage, his lies, HIS rule breaking; but as time passed she found herself caring less and less.

It wasn't as though she was unaware of what she was doing; her better angels shrieked in terror over the ease of her choices, but she'd locked them in an imaginary cage and thrown away the proverbial key. What she put most of her effort into was keeping her heart from the equation; she and Negan had reached their relationship through fucking; and that was all it was and all it would ever be. She made herself okay with that, desperately convinced herself that she only needed him for his cock; it made it slightly more bearable.

Of course, he didn't know any of that yet. She'd been leaving him with an icy shoulder since his office, rejecting his calls and remaining strictly professional at the bar. She didn't want him having any expectations for their weekend; in a large part because she was still processing her feelings and shredding them to bits. Delle wouldn't lay a finger on him til she was ready, and ready meant empty, devoid of that pesky emotion she felt when she looked at him. All she wanted was lust.

"You alright, Miss Cornish?" She blinked and looked over to see two of Eric's teammates staring back worriedly.

"Oh, uh... yeah, 'm fine. Why?" She replied.

"You just got really red n' angry lookin' for a second," the first boy piped up, the other still looking wary. "Just checkin' you're okay."

She gave them her best, dazzling smile. "I'm doing great, boys; you focus on your game, okay?"

With a confident nod the kids seemed sated, returning their attentions to Negan's words; she was still in the midst of her process. It didn't help him constantly looking in her direction and flashing her that toothy grin; he knew just what he was doing and she hated it.

Despite all her power, her mind would consistently drift back to his wife; and that's when the guilt would go shooting through her like sharp lightning. So far as she knew, the poor woman still had no
idea what her husband was up to, what he was capable of; it sounded like a nightmare. *She's the one who chased him into your arms, Delle,*' her devils were singing to her now, patting her back in pride. *She should've kept her hubby happy if she didn't want him finding someone new.* They weren't thoughts she was proud of, but her twisted perspective reasoned them to be believable. He had told her himself, he didn't feel married anymore, unloved; true he was a talented liar, but the look on his face spoke to an honesty in his statement. *If you were her you'd never give him reason to look at another woman...*

She shook her head to try and clear the thoughts, keeping them at bay before jealousy could start to seep in. Sex. That's all it ever was, and all it was ever going to be.

They pulled into a low end hotel, simple yet accommodating, to get the boys settled. The game was scheduled for Sunday but they were to spend the Saturday practicing and getting used to an unfamiliar field. Negan ordered bunk assignments, 4 to a room, which included he and Delle sharing a space. The team had let loose a collective hoot over this, though hard looks from the siblings Cornish silenced them quickly.

"Calm down you horndogs, separate beds," Negan frowned, patting Delle's shoulder as innocuously as possible. "S'okay with you?" He raised a brow in question, awaiting her answer.

"Yeah, fine. I will have no problem keeping my hands to myself, geezer." She omitted her usual cussing in the presence of the students, but he still felt it in her tone. He couldn't tell if she was being truthful or not; after they'd be interrupted in his office he wondered if he'd blown his chances completely. She was avoiding him again and he wasn't sure how much of that he could take. Even after she'd learned the truth he wanted her, possibly more than he had before; it was maddening to be so near and do nothing. Instead of acting he threw himself into ball practice, hauling his little crew out to the nearby hosting high school and their diamond as Delle tagged along; what else was she going to do?

"Get the lead out Addams! Goddamn sprint!" Negan's bellows were wild across the near deserted school grounds, the boys in their gym clothes to keep their uniforms clean til the game. Almost all of them bore expansive sweat stains, Negan running them ragged; half out of a pursuit of a win, half out of irritation. Delle watched his orders doled out amongst the wheezing and perspiring teenagers and couldn't help but find it a funny scene; Eric tried to keep himself upright but even he was showing signs of slowing down.

"You're gonna run them into the dirt, Coach!" She cupped her hands round her mouth and yelled, Negan throwing her a grumpy look. "Ease up!"

"Yeah you can help coach when you get yourself a teaching degree and one of these nifty damn whistles!" He lifted the silver whistle around his neck and held it between his grin, trilling long and loud as be turned back to his team. She couldn't stifle a chuckle, something in him made him so enigmatic and charming. He just oozed authority and control; it made it all the more satisfying to challenge him, push back and force him to push harder. The way he spoke to his team was nigh on inspirational, the way Eric stared at him like he was a god warmed her heart...

'No; no heart warming,' she chided herself, hands clenching in her lap. *Bed warming at best. Sex and that's all.* Biting into her lip she contented herself with japes and quips towards her brother as he scrambled around the field at lightning speed, running suicides for some unknown reason. It was rounding the end of their second hour there when Negan finally let up, the kids barely making it to the spectator seats before crashing, heaps of sweat and aches. Delle smiled sympathetically at her brother, clinging to his water bottle like a life vest.
"Quick breather, then a few cool down laps, men! We'll mop the floor with those morons tomorrow!" Negan's spirit was rousing but the boys wouldn't hear of it, groaning at the very idea.

"Awe, c'mon Coach; let the poor fellas rest up for tomorrow. Think they've earned it." Delle offered, cocking her head to the side.

"You volunteerin' to run those laps for 'em, Miss Cornish?" He asked with a snarky smirk, arms crossing over his barreled chest.

She stood defiantly, taking steps off the bleachers one bench at a time. "Why the hell not? You wanna race?" She grinned as she unzipped her jacket, tossing it to be left in a grey tank and leggings.

"The Coach assigns the laps, Miss Cornish; he doesn't run them." He chuckled; though a part of him worried he wouldn't be able to keep up with her in this instance.

"That's fine; I hear knees can get real rickety with age," she began stretching her muscles, making a show of her lats and the way her shirt rode up as she arched; she barely noticed the teen boys gawking her way. "How many laps am I doing?"

"Twelve; one for every one of these poor saps you're sacrificing for," he paused, running a hand across his stubble. "Let's call it thirteen; baker's dozen."

With that she ambled to the edge of the field, a nearby corner; the strange layout of the grounds meant she'd run right by her hometown audience with every circle. "Could've at least made it hard!" She sneered, finding her footing on the red gravel track and taking off like a gunshot; she could always run like the wind.

"Goddamn, Fang," Negan caught a quiet whisper behind him, one of the boys. "Your sister is ballsy as hell."

"Language." Negan tossed over his shoulder, though he agreed wholeheartedly. Delle was brave and unruly, the pair of lady-nuts on her were gargantuan; she was a force to be reckoned with. As she sprinted round the field Negan watched in quiet admiration, the sight of her now and the sight of her that day, months ago on his grounds, mixing in an intoxicating formula of his own emotions. 'That girl is gonna be the end of you,' his all but dead morals chastised. 'Mark my words.'

By the end of the thirteenth lap, Delle's skin was glistening in a film of sweat, her hair wilder than before and her skin red from expended energy. She panted standing in front of Negan who was doing all he could not to picture her naked, taking his cock with the same reactions.

"Night... off..." she said breathlessly, her eyes focused despite a tired body.

"What was that?" He replied, tilting his head.

"Give 'em... the night... off. They've earned it." She heaved, her brother joining her and offering the last of his water which she gladly drained. She wobbled slightly but would not bend, not to him. Not like this, anyway.

"Well goddamn. You boys have yourself a guardian freakin' angel here!" He encircled her in a platonic-looking toss of his arm onto her shoulder. "Let's hear a real nice thank you and maybe you'll get the evening to yourselves."
The chorus of gratitude that sprang forth was as genuine and real as the exhausted team could manage, but was just satisfactory enough for their Coach. On exhausted legs they hauled themselves back to their hotel and up to their rooms; most out cold before their heads hit their pillows.

"You tell those kids to shower in the morning," Delle demanded, leaning her own aching body against a wall in the lobby. "They'll knock the other team out with how they fucking reek."

"Scare tactic, darlin'," he grinned, taking some pleasure in her clear exhaustion. "You know, we've got some free time. What do you say to a drink?"

She looked at him perplexed; sure she had her fake ID on her, but she was surprised he'd want her out in public, even outside of their town. "Think I could do with a shower myself; I look like a drowned rat."

"You shut your mouth, you look sexy as all get out," he said lowly, eyes dragging down her figure as they boarded the elevator to their shared room. "All rough and tussle; like a little scrapper."

"You want me to look like I've been in a fight?" She scoffed as the door clicked open to their room; trying hopelessly to push the memories of their last shared hotel stay out of her head. She tore open her backpack and pulled free her change of clothes, fresh underwear, jeans and an oversized sweater, a hand me down of her mother's. "You're into some freaky shit, Negan."

It was the first time she'd said his name on the trip and he was a little embarrassed of how thrilled he was to hear it. 'She's got you on a goddamn string, you old dog.' He merely snickered and watched as she grabbed a complimentary towel from the hotel closet, locked herself in the bathroom and switched on the faucet. The soft splatter of the shower had him wishing he had X-ray vision.

Chapter End Notes

Delle's making every effort to make something so awful okay! (It's not okay D:)

Please leave a comment if you're enjoying the story so far :) I've got a little writing burn out so I could use some oomph!

♡♡♡♡
Delle was exhausted. Ever since rejecting Negan on that rooftop he’d deemed her the only man for the job on night shifts; nights were growing colder and seemed to stretch on forever. With no means of tracking timing she was lucky if she caught the tail end of breakfast or dinner at the beginning and end of her watches; and the bustle of the Sanctuary meant it was far more difficult for her to find fit sleep in the day. Some days she felt like the dead outside, mindlessly shuffling along in her work, barely keeping up conversation before slipping out of attention.

"Well aren't you a ray of sunshine." She didn't have the energy to lift her head from the steel table, but recognized Simon's mockingly cheery tone over her.

"And lollipops," she whimpered, forcing her eye open to see a sympathetic smirk. "Your boss is running me fucking ragged."

"Your boss too, sweetheart," he chuckled, curving into the bench beside her. "Fuck he smells good,' her demons murmured; they were right. He smelled clean, freshly bathed but stoked in spice and warmth; cold rum on a hot night. 'Just bury yourself in his chest, he won't mind.' "How's that night watch treating you?"

"Oh it's the best fucking time, bean pole! You gotta try it sometime. It's like goddamn Disney land." He laughed and rubbed a hand across her shoulders in support. 'Oh he's so warm.'

He leaned his forearms against the table, legs gangly and crossed in the aisle. "I'll have to take your word for it, Twisted," he leaned in close to lower his volume. "I do miss our chats, though - don't suppose you have a night off soon?" He let a finger trail across her bicep, eyes flicking over her face for a reaction. "I miss you."

'He misses me?' She was surprised by his tenderness, candor; Negan was never like that. "Heh, I wish. Pretty sure Negan has plans to turn me into a popsicle up there." She managed a soft smile; something about the fatigue in her hooded eyes made her that much more endearing.

"Think you could manage a trade? Someone who could handle the watch for an evening?" He leaned in deep, dark eyes drilling into hers. "Don't mean to be so pushy; but you look like you could use a drink."

He had a talent for making her smile; there was an understanding there, likely from his own years of putting up with Negan. There was elsewise, too, something sweeter in him. Not necessarily kindness, but something more comforting than what lived inside Negan. "I'll see what I can do, you needy old thing." She breathed, her eyes shutting again.

"How are all you fuckers doing this beautiful damn day!" That wicked, rasping voice was booming from above and almost immediately brought on a splitting headache. Negan had stomped his way across the raised platform above the trading floor, staring out proudly at his creation. She brought her head up to glare at him, but her eyes were quickly drawn to the four figures who stood behind him; women, beautiful, young, dressed all in black. She'd somehow not set eyes on time in her entire time
in the fortress.

The wives.

Their ages and looks varied; blonde, brunette, ginger, raven haired like herself. They were dressed as if at a funeral, and their expressions played the part; not one looked happy, and only one or two managed to look at their shared husband. *'Married by choice, right,'* she scoffed inwardly, hands twisting into fists. *'How could I ever want him?'

*You know how.'*

"Now, I try and provide for all of you, don't I?" He began, beginning his descent down the adjoining staircase, his women in tow. "I keep a roof over your heads, keep your bellies full; all I ask, is you pull your weight, and you mind. Your. Fucking. Beeswax," he banged Lucille - always at his side - against the floor with each word, setting all around him on edge. "And then I hear from my dear girls here," he thrust his bat in their direction, causing a jump and jolt in all of them. *They're so fearful, it's only Negan.'" That some stupid, motherfucking nimrod has gone and tried touching what belongs to me!"

He crosses back to the blonde girl, maybe even younger than Delle; the way he gripped her chin and pulled her eye up, brought up unfounded jealousy. *'Don't start that again now.'"* Amber, sweetheart. Which poor sap here was making a grab at you?"

She seemed to shiver from top to bottom, hand shaking as her finger pointed to an older man who seemed to have sweat cascading from his scalp. Delle watched as he tried to run, only to see two nearby Saviors - one who she knew to be Arat - collared him and forced him against a quickly vacated table.

"Donny!" Negan marvelled, his footsteps heavy as he made his way over, Lucille swinging in circles by his side. "Couldn't keep those grubby fucking digits to yourself, huh!? I mean, Amber is one sweet piece of ass, but I thought you understood the rules!" The man's sobs reverberated off the table, tears soaking the metal as Negan slid down on his haunches, that wide grin spelling death.

"You know what you did, don't you?" He growled through his smile.

"P-please Negan, I'm sorry, I don't... please if you'll just--"

"Ah ah ah, I don't wanna hear this pathetic, bitch ass whining!" He wrapped his second hand around Lucille's base, rearing back for the kill. "At least take it like a man."

She'd heard him crack skulls before, but the way the bone and bat bounced off the table was some newly created sound, some terrible music. The room released a collective shudder, some unable to hold in their cries as he brought down justice, over and over again. The table and surroundings were splattered and slithering with streams of red, bone and brain when he finally pulled away, the bloody spray having soaked his jacket, shirt and skin. His fury had even struck the girls, some bearing a few droplets of crimson themselves.

"Now I don't expect to do this again, so burn this image into your minds!" He took a step up onto the table, pointing to the headless body before him. "This is what happens when you touch what's mine! Now doesn't that paint a fucking picture!" Solitary laughter filled the room, raucous as thunder. He stepped back to his wives, Amber staring at the body of the man she'd all but ordered dead. "What do you say, dear wife?"
She couldn't bring herself to look at him, voice crackling as she murmured a thank you in terror. Delle saw the redhead take her hand, squeezing tightly as Negan patted the blonde's cheek, fingerprints of blood staining her skin. Despite their fear he seemed satisfied, ending his little display with a bow. He paused a moment to pass Delle and Simon; as per usual, Simon bore little reaction but a smile under his whiskers. Delle though, stared up in defiance, eyes hard and cold.

"Somethin' to say, Miss Delle?" He raised a brow, his persona in full effect for his audience.

"Well dealt justice, boss," she said softly, nodding her head; she was fully awake now. "Rules are rules."

She surprised him with her answer; maybe she was finally coming around. "Good girl." He chuckled, taking his leave; his wives stared at her disturbed, shocked by this young woman as they followed.

"Yeah, I'll find someone to cover me tomorrow night," she whispered to Simon once their leader was out of earshot. "I really need a drink."

Chapter End Notes

Short chapter today folks, but vital for establishing later goings on ;) I wonder if ya'll are seeing the little connections between Negan and Delle in their speech as well as their manners?

Please leave a comment, let me know know how you like this and how I'm doing! I love you guys ♡♡♡♡
"You are a fucking angel," Delle clapped her hands together in glee. "Really, you are just a peach. I love you."

Dwight smiled and patted her shoulder, wrapping his returned scarf around his head; it was going to be a cold one. When Delle had come to him about covering for her a single night, he was happy to oblige; she'd been keeping his family fed and safe, letting them work for Tina's medicine. "It's no problem, Delle. You've been a huge help since we got here. Plus I can use a few extra points."

That last bit concerned her. "Still struggling with the insulin cost?"

Dwight's lips pursed, his brow knit as he nodded. "She's type one, needs it pretty regularly. We try and keep up, but..."

She gave him a quick hug, then; supportive, sympathizing. "You let me know if there's more I can do, alright?"

He hugged back, one hand steadying his weapon on his arm. "Thanks, Delle. Go off to your date, now." She laughed as he gave a wink; he was no fan of Simon, but what made Delle happy kept them happy.

"I'll give you all the gory details tomorrow!" She skipped into a sprint up to Simon's quarters; he'd wanted to use his room for their little meeting, and she was happy for a change in scenery. She hadn't been up to his floor since the night she'd slept on his couch, seen that incredible physique; with any luck on her side she'd see it again soon. She shut her ears as she passed Negan's own chambers, sight unseen, but the unmistakable sound of sex therein.

'Fuck you, Negan,' she grumbled silently as she knocked at Simon's door. 'We'll show you how it's done.'

"Hey beautiful." That mustached grin shone out at her as he answered his door, a ready drink already in his hand. She returned his smile and entered, eying his glass.

"Don't suppose that's for me?" She asked, a chuckle falling from his lips as he handed her the glass. She took a deep sip, noting he'd brought out the good stuff for tonight. "What are your intentions, you old dog?"

"Gotta loosen you up somehow; figure Negan must have you wound up tighter than a spring." He shrugged and made his way to his sofa, where the liquor and extra glass sat waiting on a side table.

"Read my mind, Si," another sip. "What was that bullshit yesterday? 'Paints a fucking picture', how cheesy can you get?" She snorted and joined him, legs curling under herself as she sat.

"He showboats; you can't say it doesn't work," he pointed out as he swirled his glass, now full, before taking a swig. "He likes to remind folks what's his."
"Which according to him is absolutely everything; he's a fucking toddler!" She exclaimed, first drink now nestled safely in her belly.

"I see what you mean; he can be downright medieval about his wives. God forbid anyone even look at them and he'll pluck their eyes out." Simon agreed, staring into the brown liquid in his hand.

"They looked absolutely mortified to be there. Do they... do they have any choice in marrying him?" She hoped her query wouldn't give herself away.

"There's always a choice," Simon explained firmly, having heard Negan's spiel a hundred times over. "Most times the girls are too weak or don't have skills useful to the Sanctuary; so they marry for protection and welfare. I think one of them, their boyfriend got caught stealing from the community, and rather than let him be punished she offered herself up," he placed a hand on his chest romantically. "Isn't that just goddamn heroic?"

She rolled her eyes, deep with sarcasm. "Yeah fucking saintly," he watched as she physically shuddered, a look of disgust on her features. "I mean I just don't know how such a royal douchebag can go around doing whatever or whoever the fuck he wants at will, it drives me up the damn wall!"
Simon listened attentively, as he always did; he knew there was something there, something she wouldn't say about Negan, but figured she'd allow more info when the time was right.

"Thank god Dwight was able to cover tonight. I really needed some face time with my partner in crime," he was pulled from his thought by a wink and a squeeze of his hand, those lively orbs gazing at him. "Any longer and I would've hopped off the fucking roof."

"Don't you dare," he smiled, letting his arm curve against the back of the sofa. "Life around here is finally getting interesting. And besides, you can't jump with your feet frozen in place."

She chuckled against her second glass, teeth knocking against the rim when her shoulders shook. "I'll give you that. Winter's are getting colder now, I think. Was never built for the cold."

"I love it," Simon admitted, sipping. "Reminds me of home."

Her ears perked at the mention of 'home'; for as much time as they spent together, Simon rarely mentioned his life before the end. "Where is home?" She inquired, her finger haphazardly tracing lines around her glass.

"Born n' raised off the shores of Lake Erie, in Pennsylvania; but I was livin' in DC when the shit hit the fan," she'd never been that far north; he was practically Canadian. "Stayed pretty local since then. I like the cold, though; reminds me of my youth."

"You make yourself sound past your prime there, bean pole." she purred, letting her lids flutter a bit. He grinned in response, the hand against the upholstery stringing through her ponytail.

"Hardly; men age like wine, darlin'. Only better with every passing year." Those dark eyes threatened to vanish her panties away, they were so inviting. 'Pace yourself, Delle.'

"You must have ice water in those veins to deal with weather colder than this." She said hurriedly, another swig down her gullet.

"Why do you think I moved south? I like the cold but not year round... well that and... and my wife wanted to be closer to her family."
Her eyes went wide despite herself at that; it hadn't even occurred to her that there had been a loved one, once upon a time, for him too. "You were married?"

"Once," he confirmed, his voice soft, somewhere else. "Diane. Twelve years of matrimonial bliss, til the world went dark... I didn't see her again til she was already dead." The pain in his memory was intense, tragic; one she knew all too well.

"I'm so sorry, Simon," she squeezed his thigh in honest condolence, though her head was beginning to swim. "I'm sorry you had to see anyone you loved like that."

His hand found hers, holding it with a shocking softness; quite literally, his skin was strangely smooth. "Thanks... putting her down was the worst part of it. I kept trying to see if there was any part of her left in there, but... well, you know. I'm sure you had to deal with it yourself, at some point."

She grew quiet, drawing into herself; by the time the apocalypse had come, there was only one person who she'd really loved. "Can't say I have," She replied, finishing her second glass with a gulp. "Put down a loved one, that is."

He looked perplexed, his brow tight for a moment; almost everyone in their world had been forced into such a challenge at one time or another. Somehow she'd slipped from it unscathed. He had to wonder the life she'd lead that the awful task had never fallen to her.

"You're one lucky duck, then." He attempted to lighten the spirit of the conversation with a laugh. She didn't join him in it, still studying her drink like it held the secrets of the universe. Maybe Simon would be worth telling; maybe he'd know how it felt. To be so useless.

"I don't know about that," she croaked, clearing her throat from nerves. "I... I lost people, I just..."

A warm hand fell to her shoulder, those sweet brown eyes warm and understanding. 'So different from the night he caught me.' "You don't have to tell me, Delle," he spoke so smoothly, like hearing melted chocolate. "Point of the past is that it stays there."

'Clearly you haven't met my past, then.' She couldn't help thinking, despite the grateful look on her face. "I'd like you to know about him, Simon. I... I want you to know about me." Who was this girl who sat next to him? Simon had a strange effect on her, letting honest, vulnerable truths tumble from her lips. She didn't fear repercussions from him, her secrets wouldn't be weapons.

Most of them, anyway.

"Did you lose your husband?" He asked soothingly, earning a quick, sorrowful giggle.

"Oh god no," she breathed, taking an extra swig for courage. "I... I lost my brother."

Chapter End Notes

Healthy helping of Simon ;) let me know what you have to say!

Comments help me keep writing ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 28

Chapter Notes

Hope yall are ready for a few straight days of drama and angst ♡♡♡♡

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Before...

By the time Delle stepped out of the shower, thoroughly scrubbed with the customary mini bottles of shampoo and body wash, the room was empty. A small part of her had expected - and hoped - to find Negan on her bed, naked as the day he was born and waiting for her raring to go; but no such luck befell her. What she did find was a note, in Negan's familiar chickenscratch:

Went down to the hotel bar; meet me if you want. Or don't, I'm not your boss.

She smiled as she retrieved a comb from her bag, untangling damp knots as she paced the floor. Sitting on her temporary bed she wondered if she'd found her way to the head space she sought out; had she managed to remove all the messy emotions that came along with Negan so she could enjoy all the messiness that came with sleeping with him? It was an unusual question, a hard one. She was removing all notions of his sweetness, how he smiled when she laughed, the meaningless kindnesses he'd used to convince her time and again in favor of all the muscle memories he'd left her, and it was tricky to decide where each one fit.

'A drink might help calm your nerves,' her devils suggested, coiling their imaginary tails around her limbs as they guided her into putting on her shoes.

"Calm my nerves," she snorted. "I know how I get when I drink."

'Isn't that the point?'

Wasn't it? She had to admit, loosening up a little bit would benefit her in this particular moment; as she walked down the hallway back to the elevator she decided on a limit of three for herself. That seemed like a good, even space to be in for the deeds she was thinking of committing.

The on grounds bar was about as dull as the rest of the hotel; bare white walls, lit with dim purple lights on brown mottled carpet. From a far corner songs of the seventies bloomed out of a rickety, faux wood jukebox; crooning ballads of longing and heart ache would be the soundtrack of their evening. A few unfamiliar bodies lined the faux wood barstools while a smattering of patrons had sequestered themselves into booths. She guessed she and Negan wouldn't look a hair out of place, based on the few couples she could see with tongues down each other's throats.

"Delle, darlin'!" His voice caught her attention; he'd picked the corner booth, secluded and quiet, and was beckoning over with a dark drink in his hand.
"Nice n' private spot, huh?" She scoffed as she slid into the cushioned seat across from him.

"Well could've just ordered a few drinks to our room, but the school would've seen that on the receipts," he chuckled and sipped at his drink; she bet it wasn't his first. "Need to be smart about these things."

"I bet you do," She snarked as a bedraggled waitstaff sidled up to their table for her order. "Can I get a scotch and soda?"

"Sure," the waiter glanced at her now, noticing her looks. "...can I see some ID?"

She gave a relaxed nod, slipping her fake from her wallet; it was surprisingly realistic, and was worth its weight in gold with how many times it had worked. The waiter's face calmed, handing it back.

"Scotch n' soda, coming right up Miss Adelaide." He whisked himself away, her attentions turned back to Negan.

"Adelaide?" He chuckled, sneaking the ID from her fingers; sure enough there was her picture, maybe a little younger, along with an inaccurate age and the name Adelaide Williams. "Little close to the real thing, ain't it?"

"It is the real thing." She replied, overjoyed when her drink materialized before her, grateful for a little inebriation.

He looked taken aback, setting down his whiskey. "Your name is Adelaide?"

"Yep," she replied, wishing he'd drop it. "Adelaide William Cornish."

He couldn't help a quick belly laugh, apologizing as she glared daggers into his soul. "Sorry doll, Adelaide I can understand... but William? Last I checked you're not hiding a dick in those pants."

"You sure about that? You're not that perceptive," it felt good to tease again, enjoying how his cheeks dimpled at her ribbing. "My father wanted his first born to be named after him; didn't matter that I popped out without a Y chromosome."

"Fuck that's vain as shit," he muttered, finishing the last of his drink. "No wonder you go by Delle," he let his fingers reach across the surface and to take her hand, fingers looking so delicate in his. "Less of a mouthful to moan."

She pulled away, her eyes averting from his face; the hand holding, sharing, it was backtracking all her work to lose the attachment. *This isn't a date,* she reminded herself. *Don't go telling your fuck buddy your life story; it's just sex.* She busied her hands with her glass, seemingly fascinated by the condensation collecting on her thumbs. He noticed her apprehension and sighed, leaning back against his seat.

"You could fuckin' let me touch you, Delle," he grumbled and stared into her face. "I'm not gonna hurt you."

"I know that," she shrugged, avoiding his eyeline. "I'm still... processing."

"Then fuckin' talk to me. I'm half of... whatever this is." He offered, letting his elbows lean against
"I just... I feel things here," she allowed, fingers dancing between them. "And I need not to. I need this to just be sex."

Negan gave her a pitying stare, but understood her reasoning; he'd fucked up royally, and sympathized with her need to remove her heart from their mess. Not that he wanted her to. "It doesn't need to be. You're allowed to like me; just don't fall in love." He added with a smirk. 'Take your own advice, dumbass.'

Swallowing, she continued. "I can't. Fuck, Negan; I still want you, terrible as that is. All I can think about is fucking you, I'm trying not to climb over this damn table to do it; but I can't do it while my stupid hea--"

'Shut up about your heart.'

"It's just... it's just sex." She finished.

The waiter came back around, freshening their glasses. Negan was stewing and stormy; though he didn't completely grasp why. She'd said everything he'd wanted, if he wished he could hoist her over his shoulder, take her up to their room and pound her til dawn; why couldn't he be satisfied with that? He had done fine with it in his youth, enough one night stands to fill a phone book, but Delle... why could she subtract her heart from their equation and why didn't he want her to? Why couldn't he do the same?

"I'm gonna go on liking you, then." he declared with a gulp of whiskey.

She crossed her arms, sinking against the vinyl seating. "What, can't just think of me as some tight hole?"

"What th-- no, Delle, fuck," he seemed honestly irate over her words, hand smacking the table. "Don't fuckin' talk about yourself like that. You're... I like you, is all. I like the way you don't take shit from anyone, I like how you give me shit. You're a little fighter, it's goddamn adorable."

He was upsetting her now, her hands tightening into fists. "I'm a fighter because I have had to be, Negan. My life, my past isn't some cute quirk for you to idolize. My flaws aren't for you."

Shit; he'd said the wrong thing. What he wished he'd said was 'I love that about you', but he thought it would've scared her away. Little had he realized his safe bet had been the worse choice. And as usual, his temper got ahead of him. "Fuckin' christ Delle, there's nothin' wrong with somebody liking your flaws. You don't need to fight me."

She glowered, her nails dug into the flesh of her palms. 'If I don't fight I'll fall,' she told herself. 'And I can't fall for you.' She chose to say nothing, merely sit, contemplating her drink.

"Just gonna clam up then? Fuck," he found himself standing, doling out a few bills for his drinks. "You want to keep feelings out of this? Fine. But don't expect me to do the fucking same." He snarled as angry stomps took him from their table, Delle left alone with rage, lust and alcohol.

Chapter End Notes
This one went through a good chunk of last minute tweaks to work with story flow; hopefully ya'll like it :)

Please leave a comment if you like this, really does keep me inspired and writing ♡♡♡♡


Chapter 29

Chapter Notes

Let me know if this format works for this chunk of story.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"It was last winter; days were cold, nights were colder. Never really crushed his spirit, though," she gave a grim smile in remembrance, her heart breaking all over again. "We’d been holed up in this abandoned two storey for a couple days, doing fine for the most part..."

_______________________________

"Delle!" Her eyes opened to her brother's face, contorted in terror. She'd went and fell asleep when she shouldn't have again; the early morning sun was filtering in through the broken window, with the stomach churning sounds of a mass of corpses just outside. "Delle we need to go, now!"

She nodded obediently; Eric had fallen into the nature of a leader after doomsday. She was happy to be his muscle where he needed her, keeping each other alive; she'd messed up, however, letting sleep take her on her shift. She wasn't sure how long she'd been out for, but the dead were swarming outdoors and beginning to break in. Their first move was to baricade the bedroom door as best they could, shoving every bit of furniture left in their surroundings to keep the dead out; the second being to tighten their ropes.

The houses were row by row, barely divided by 8 feet between them, all of them nearly identical but for paint jobs. This had been their escape route all along; when they'd first found the neighbourhood they'd gone through and strung up ropes, interconnecting through matching windows in each house. They'd thanked their lucky stars for uninspired architects. She hoisted her pack onto her back, tucking her hunting knife into her boot for safety while Eric took up his own bag and machete.

"Let's get going." He said sternly but smiled reassuringly, checking for a well tied knot on their end.

"Adios you dead fucks." She hissed under her breath as she took a strong hold of the twine based rope, her knees wrapping around it as she began to drag her body along the line. 8 feet had never seemed so long, with the hungry biters below her she felt like a carrot dangled for rabbits. She felt herself falter for a moment, her ankles locking tighter around the cord. 'I will not die here.' She decided, her hands burning with the grip on the rope. Real salvation touched her hands when she grasped the window sill of the next house; she wiggled her way inside, her skin snagging and cutting under a few broken window shards, but glad to have her soles on floorboards again.

"C'mon Fang, shimmy!" She called, holding the rope taut; he had a few pounds on her, and the extra tension was necessary. He threw her that distinctive smile, confident and steadfast as he took on the same position, dangling from the rope like an ornament.

It wasn't until she felt the tension ease that she realized what had happened.
Her blade had come loose during her error, nicking a few frays into the rope. Thick as it was, it was compromised; and with her added pull and Eric's weight, it was failing fast.

"Go back!" She shrieked as further fibers snapped. She let go of her end, letting the knot that anchored it do its job and hoping the slack would keep from further breakage; but she had no luck in that. "Go the fuck back!"

He was scrambling, his long limbs failing him in his hour of need; she reached out as far as she could, fingers grasping at his wrists as the cord gave way, snapping with a loud pop and alerting the dead below.

She held him there, arm outstretched to his, her heart allowing a little hope in before it was shattered by an earsplitting scream; his height became his downfall, his legs just long enough for the biters to sink their teeth into.

"N-no! Fuck, Eric no!" She could see them chewing at his flesh, chunks of muscle and sinew coming free with each tear, each pained cry. She pulled with both arms, all her might, to get him up to her, but the dead held tight to their meal.

"Delle..." His voice was soft, dying. His eyes streamed with tears through a wavering smile, trying to be brave for his sister. "Delle get out of here. Let me go."

"I can fix you! I'll get you out of here, just--" she yanked harder but again there was no relent below.

"I'm cooked, Delle," his voice crackled with sadness, trying to figure out his final words. "Let me go; they'll be distracted." He groaned as they tore at his tendons, those powerful legs that had never failed him were done for.

"Fang... Eric... I can't, I won't go on without you," she sobbed; his fingers were growing lax in her hands, it was only her holding on now. "I can't let you go."

"Please Delle," he pleaded, his skin beginning to go white, sweat beading across his face. "Get out of here. Keep fighting."

There was no out here. His legs were all but gone at the calves, even if she could pull him up, he couldn't move. The virus was in him now. She'd failed at the one thing she'd always said she'd do; keep him safe. Now he was trying to do the same for her.

"I love you, kiddo." She breathed, tears falling to the hungry horde as she let her grip loosen.

"I love you too, Delle." She let go, watched as he was dragged into the pit, eyes unable to shut as she saw him torn apart, ears all too receptive to his cries of anguish and despair; he screamed for her, he needed her help that she'd never be able to supply again. She forced herself from the spot, finally, when his voice ceased; there were many houses to go, many ropes to climb.

It was 3 days before the horde finally disappeared. 3 days of eyes wide open, legs sticky with her own blood, sleepless and empty, hands clasped over her mouth to keep her screams from sounding. That morning she climbed down, into the now barren streets, silent but for wind and the crunch of her footsteps on bleak, grey snow.

She walked the block down entranced, until she made it to the scene of his death. Logic told her he was gone, reason assured that he had been ripped apart; love let her hope, let her pray for some
miracle that he'd be waiting for her, smiling and laughing. But life had no such kindness waiting there; all she found was a dangling rope that shifted in the coldest wind, his machete and pack that had fallen with him. All that was left was a mass of blood and skin on the ground.

Chapter End Notes

This was hard to write, hell even hard to read again while formatting. We'll still enjoy scenes from Fang, but I figured y'all ought to know what happened.

Please leave a comment, I promise things will get lighter soon!

Your words keep my words going♡♡♡♡
Chapter 30

Chapter Notes

Yall have earned this after putting up with all those angsty feels! Enjoy ~♡

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Before...

Eight. Eight glasses now littered her table, all of which bore her fingerprints. Three drinks had come and gone quickly as Negan had left her seething and aroused.

'I'M a fucking brat? She mused in a hazy mind, her vision half blurred with a mix of drink and fury. 'He's a fucking brat! Trying to have his cake and eat it too, thinking he can blink those doe eyes and I'll drop my panties; entitled fucking geezer!' She slammed down another empty glass and stood, legs loose and wobbling as she found her waiter, paying her tab.

"Motherfucker thinks he's got some magical rod between his legs," she growled to herself, disturbing the older couple who rode the elevator with her who seemed to get off a floor early. "Trying to fuck me into his pocket; I can be just as fucking magical you fucking fuck!" She sneered as she fumbled her room key, kicking off her shoes in the nearly pitch black room. She stood swaying and stewing at the foot of his bed, his sleeping body laid out before her. A powerful arm laid against his chest, the other cradling his pillow; the cheap bedspread hid his lower half from sight, legs haphazard in slumber. That face seemed serious, brow furrowed and mouth twitching in some dream.

'Fuck, he is gorgeous,' her devils were almost applauding the man in front of her, a sentiment she shared; he drove her up the wall but she'd just as happily would have him fuck her against the same. 'Maybe that cock is magical; it's got a goddamn gravitational pull!' Those demons snickered as she pulled free of her clothes, lust and defiance moving her limbs as the bed compressed under her weight. She felt him shift as she lifted the blanket, crawling underneath to find her query.

He was sound asleep, deep in a nightmare; she'd run off. He hadn't convinced her, hadn't won her over. She was simply gone. It left him shockingly scared as he found himself roused from sleep by an unusual sensation; wet, warm, a slight hum. The dream disappeared as his sleepy mind registered what he was feeling.

"Oh fuck," he groaned, reaching down under the blanket to his groin to find a thick mane of hair rising and falling over it. His head tilted back against his pillow as both palms gripped the long hair, easing it - her - along the length of his dick in her mouth. "Goddamn it Delle."

She moaned a grouchy response but didn't stop, her intentions focused and determined; she could be just as tempting as him. Her tongue cushioned his shaft as she slid him deep, his spongy head grazing the back of her throat; her eyes watered but Delle wasn't about to back down. She felt a little pang of pride as her cheeks hollowed against him, pulling back, and with it came a low growl and string of
curses from his lips.

"Oh holy shit," he panted, her head bouncing with envigoration. Her mouth was sopping wet, hot; even the odd sting of her teeth seemed to harden him further. "Oh you've been holding out on m-me, sweetheart!"

She slid from him for a moment to apply a long, slow lick from base to tip, swirling little circles against the cusp of his head as his hips twitched in an effort to remain still. Her hand grasped the base as she popped him back between her lips, now working in tandem with jerks and sucks. His hands were winding into her hair now, holding on for dear life when he felt the nails of her free hand slide up his ribs and drag downward, sweet, hot lines of pain combining with her efforts and causing him to thrust upward. She hummed a softer sound, almost excited, while she felt him stiffen further in her efforts; he was getting close, his groans and snarls filling her ears as a reward for her talents.

"Mm that's it, don't stop," he huffed, his breath disjointed, his release almost bubbling to crest him over the edge. She wasn't slowing, no, if anything she was doubling down on her actions, the wetness of her mouth keeping her hand's pumping well lubed, the hand keeping his cock directed perfectly down her throat. The soft noises in her mouth reverberated off his length and added a new layer of pleasure, his arousal close to his precipice. "Uhn, good girl...fuck I'm gonna--"

And she stopped outright; pulling back her hands, mouth, near everything touching him. It sent a shock wave of denial through his body, his muscles contracting in frustration and need as he let out a long whine. She lifted the blanket from herself then, eyes focused if a little bleary, body bare before him. He could guess what she had on her mind, a smile spreading across his features, his cock quickly recovering from its denied orgasm in excitement for a different kind. He moved to sit up but felt her hand against his chest, forcing him onto his back as she crawled up. "Oh.'

"Stay down, bitch," she hissed, slithering up his form until her slick was lined up with his well-loved manhood. She could feel it pulse and throb between her folds, coating him in her lower wetness. His eyes were dark, nearly black, his mouth half opened in lust and shock over the woman kneeling over him. "You're running around thinkin' this fucking cock is a gift from God," she muttered, grinding herself against it, the rigid underside rubbing up against her clit; a little moan left her lips but her stance didn't falter. "Just 'cause you know how to make a girl come, you must be some fucking wizard or some shit," she raised herself slightly, letting his tip center correctly as she slipped onto his length at an agonizingly slow speed, memorizing every ridge and vein entering her, how his eyes rolled back before they shut and his tongue licked his lip before he bit. She shuddered as he bottomed out completely; gone was the initial sting of earlier couplings, replaced with white hot need and hunger and greed. "I'm pretty fucking magical too, you fucking geezer." She breathed a laugh as she constricted her muscles like a vice grip, his body arching under her and hands grasping her hips in praise; though he finally pieced together what was happening when her nails sank into his forearms. 'Oh -- this is a fight.'

"You're a fucking witch," he rasped, as she began to move; bounce, really, using the springs of the bed and the roll of her hips to hit new spots for both of them. Her movements, though a little sloppy, we're confident and aggressive, just like her; he felt so deep, had he ever gone so deep before? No, this was all her. "Your fucking pussy is like a goddamn spell."

Her shoulders dropped back, her hands steadying herself on his thighs while her speed enhanced; the sight before him was unforgettable. Her locks were wild, a forest around her bright, furious, lusting eyes, her skin blush and tits bouncing; at his ankle he could see his cock sliding in and out of her sweet pink prison over and over again. Her clit was looking decidedly lonely, and he dared let his fingers brush across it; only to have his arm yanked away, back to her hip.
"Don't you fucking dare," she gasped, riding harder, body rolling like in some strange dance. "I'm gonna make you come, you bastard; and if you're good I'll let you make me come." She was in charge and was in no particular mood to relinquish that. It was out of character for him to submit, but seeing her truly let go, her control unwavering, was a sight he'd never imagined and never wanted to let go of.

"Yes ma'am," he purred, relaxing his grip to let her move at will; and move she did, curves winding and wriggling on his length. "You use me however you wa-ant." He shuddered and groaned under her actions, those muscles tensing around him again, walls caving in while he thrust up to meet her challenge in a sinful rhythm. He wasn't far off from his climax, her earlier work having set the course for it; she could see it in him, his torso tensing and moans growing louder, wilder and nearly animal in sound.

"You're gonna come for me, Negan." She husked, trying to keep herself from doing the same. She knew he was bordering the edge, but so was she - she wasn't going to let him win, not this round. Her strokes were languid but forceful as she watched him unravel, loud, rumbling moans of her name as she felt him come, spurts of his hot, white cream filling every inch it could; walls so sensitive she could feel a few drops slipping from their coupling.

"Fucking christ..." Negan strained under her, the muscle in his neck tensing and relaxing as the last few drops of release left his length. "That was heaven, sweetheart."

She was shivering atop him; vibrating with sensations of ardor, satisfaction and fury. She'd made good on her word; she hadn't come first this time. It felt... powerful, seeing him crumble before her. She felt strong - but incomplete. She'd given, but now she was ready to take. He didn't seem spent, eyes still hungry despite having achieved his climax. He never felt accomplished until his partner had come, too.

"Y-you're damn right," she stammered, unable to control twitches and spasms around his softening cock, sliding up to allow it freedom. "I am a fucking gift, you fucking geezer."

He chuckled, daring to let his hands slip round her back; when he found no resistance he pulled her into his chest, mouth claiming hers in fire and heat. "I am the luckiest son of a bitch on earth, then," he sighed against her lips as her hands studied his arms, tracing his ink. "You are goddamn Christmas, you little shit."

She took a breath, staring into his face; those dark eyes held more than just lust, and she knew it. There was a whole life behind them, one that existed without her in it, one that only worked without her. This was where they intersected, between sheets and tangled limbs, where something had bloomed that was never supposed to. 'Just for him, though!' She thought quickly. 'He's the one who caught feelings.'

"What're you thinking, Delle?" He prodded carefully, his hefty palms running smooth lines across her back. He could see the gears turning but didn't want to chance the wrong word.

She ran through the list of thoughts in her head; could she separate her heart from this? Did she want to? Could she keep up with all the lies their relationship required?

'It's just sex. Let it be just sex.' She prayed silently.

"What I'm thinking is I haven't come yet," she purred, dragging her teeth against his neck. "So snap
to it, Coach; make me scream your name this time."

Chapter End Notes

Thoughts? Concerns? Hypothesis? I want to hear about it!! These comments keep me focused and creative ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 31

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

She waited for him to say something, anything, as she sat in silence. Simon simply stared back, a mask of unreadable emotion on his face; the hand on her shoulder was still firm, his thumb massaging through her top, though the rest of him was still.

"...so yeah," she murmured, pouring a fresh drink to break the quiet. "That really fucking sucked."

He moved from his statue like stillness, almost causing her to jolt as his second hand reached for her face, drawing his thumb under her eye to sweep her cheek of tears. 'When did I start crying?' She wondered, that face still unknowable.

"So," he mumbled, both hands now flush against her, hungry but patient. "That's where Fang came from."

She'd barely realized she'd let her weapon's namesake spill amidst her tale, but it was unavoidable. She shook her head in affirmation, eyes drifting from his to his lips; sadness always brought out greed, a need to fuck the pain away. 'Maybe he could do just that.'

Her lips collided with his and she saw stars; the scratch of his whiskers complimented the pillowy softness of his mouth, as receptive and eager as hers. It had been a long time coming, her tongue rejoicing as it met with his mid slide, both so excited to taste the other; his flavor a delicious taste of sweetness, liquor and cleanliness. A whimper left her and vibrated against his lips, drawing forth an unimpeded groan as his arms took action, one sweeping behind her head to cradle it, hold her there, the other snaking her waist, a line of heat burning her skin under his touch. Her own arms tugged against his shoulders, begging him closer, deeper, mouths wider, groans louder.

"Hot damn," he managed to growl out as he pulled back to breathe; heat had risen in both their skins, though more apparent in the pink of her cheeks. "I've been wanting to do this since you cut that fucker's head in half."

She laughed and pecked him quickly, but not without a bite against his lips. "Since I saw you half naked across this couch, for me," she confessed, those eyes of his almost black. "Kiss me again." She demanded; he didn't needed need to be told twice, his lips still baring a smile as they found hers again, in a mutual war where both sides were winning. The hand on her waist was beginning to slip lower, cresting at the curve of her ass, begging for a handful...

"SIMON old buddy!" Her blood ran cold. 'Negan.' Her first thought was fear, had he let himself in, did he see? No, it was still just them, though his heavy hands pounded at the door. "Put your dick away and make yourself decent!"

She was to her feet quickly, sweeping up her glass as she moved to his bed. "He can't know I'm here." She hissed, the statement vague but serious. He gave a quick nod, running a hand over his face, taking a second to calm himself before moving to Negan's command.

"Boss," he greeted, opening the door to his friend and leader. It was late, he was only in a tshirt and jeans. In another context or time he might've just been over to watch a baseball game. "What can I do
"Wanted to have a quick chat," Negan replied as he sauntered in. He was quick to find a seat on the sofa, noting it's warmth. He looked to his second in command, reading his face. "Don't worry everything's roses."

Delle listened carefully, the blanket thankfully obscuring everything but an inch of light seeping in from the rest of the room. For now, she was safe.

"You are a goddamn triumph, you know that?" Negan punctuated with a pointed finger at his right hand man, who'd fetched a second glass for his guest. "Loyal to a fault, keep your shit on lock. It's like you were made for all this." He cast his paw around for emphasis as he took the freshly poured drink from Simon.

"Surviving and thriving," Simon replied with a huffed laugh; there was something else. Negan wasn't the type to dole out compliments with no point. "World works best this way."

"You are on the goddamn money there, pal," the chuckle that followed was dark, knowing. "But I'm not just here to blow smoke up your ass. I'm here to reward you."

Reward could mean many different things from a man like Negan. Sometimes a reward meant only one person had to die, sometimes it meant indentured servitude. With him it was always a chance of fate.

"We've got that big outpost going pretty strong now," he elaborated, taking a sip. "But management is all f**kered. Running around with their pants down. So you," he pointed to Simon again. "Are gonna run it."

This did feel like an honest reward; Simon had been working his way up, had earned his own community. But the outpost was miles away and would more often than not require him away from Delle.

'Not if I can help it.' He promised himself. "Well fuck me sideways, chief!" He had to at least react positively under Negan's stern eye. "Hope I'm up to the challenge."

"Oh I know you are," Negan always acted in confidence; even if there was doubt. "You'll keep those gears oiled, keep my world growing bigger; nowhere to go but up, Simon."

He smiled but stewed, his mind awash with strategy. He wouldn't go without her. "D'you... what d'you say to me bringing a few folks with me? Just a few hands to help me out."

Negan raised a brow; this was what he'd been hoping for. He wanted confirmation. "And who were you thinking about?" He already knew the name on Simon's mind.

"Maybe Hank, Baxter - oh, I like that new one, that Delle," there it was. Negan's blood rose with jealousy, possessiveness. "She's tweaked. I could use that kind of enforcer in my corner."

Negan's tongue pressed against his lip, that wolfish grin never leaving his cheeks. "Yeah I bet you could..." he drained his glass, eyes stuck to Simon. "Wouldn't hurt having that ass to look at day in day out, either."
'Shit.' Simon had overstepped. "Heh, she does have quite backside on her, yup." He knew that look on Negan's face now, it was the same way he'd looked at Donny the day before. Blinding fury, for touching what was his. He'd gone and done it now.

"And let's not forget those luscious titties, right? Bet they're a perfect fucking handful and then some." Negan's arms rested on his knees, head tilted to watch his man squirm.

"Yep." He rasped a hoarse reply. It was all he could handle getting out.

"Oh and that mouth!" Negan reared back, clapping his hands together. "Those pretty pink lips, they're just made for sucking dick, aren't they?" He waited for a response; nothing. "Aren't they, Simon?"

He swallowed thickly; he'd made the wrong choice. "Listen, Negan, I've -- she and I never-"

"Oh I know. Because I know every little thing that goes on here," his voice was black with malice despite that unbreakable grin. "I am goddamn everywhere, Si; but I could be fucking blind and still see the way you look at her."

Delle could barely breath under the bed frame, her body aching with rage. This was the new Negan, the one who believed he ran the world and owned everything he saw; including her, even with their history, he felt entitled to her. Never had she hated him more; nor herself for the heat that filled her core when he'd described her body. How could he still do this, with all he'd done?

"I..." Simon's mouth was bone dry, his body stiff as wood. Negan had him cornered like a disobedient dog, about to be shot.

After a pregnant moment of intensity, Negan broke it with a deep laugh. "Relax Simon! I'm just fucking with you," the grin became gentle, comic. "Anyone with a pair of working eyes looks at her like that. Fucking fox, that one."

A smile twitched on Simon's face but his worry didn't lessen. He stood as Negan did, waiting for his next move.

"We'll talk more about the outpost tomorrow. Plenty of kinks to work out," he patted Simon's shoulder before his hand still, his grip bone breaking. "But before I go..." he leaned in as he pulled Simon close, that wicked voice back again. "Let me make this clear; your dick even twitches from thinking about her, I'll chop the little soldier off at the root and bash your head in," with sharp eyes he stared through Simon, into his mind. "Clear?"

Anger, fear, and defeat filled Simon to the brim, dipping his head in false agreement while Negan took his leave. He muttered something about having another wife to fuck; that's what it took to turn that anger to rage.

Delle was gorgeous, it was an undisputed fact; but his attraction to her was something deeper. When he saw her stand the first time, her Fang in her hand, her man's blood spattered on her skin; he knew he was looking at a force of nature. That personality had only dragged him in, harsh and rough, jagged edges; what might have chased away others had pulled him in. She was a fiersome breed, incredibly strong; could hold her own and take care of herself so that he'd never know that pain again. She was an impossibility in the eyes of death.
And there was fucking Negan, thinking he had some claim on her just because he wanted her body. 'I saw her first,' it was a childish thought, Simon knew, but it was true. 'Fuck him. He's got enough to go around.' He turned as he remembered she was still there, crawling out from under his bed; he cursed, having hoped to see her on it rather than under it. She stood straight, grasping her drink in a tight hand as she downed it, tossing it aside.

"That fucking bastard," She snarled through clenched teeth, flared nostrils. She marched straight to him, drink and rage exciting her movements, arms pulling him tight to her, his muscles tensing and feeling oh so good. "He thinks he fucking owns me!"

"I know how frustrating it is, little psycho," he slid his fingers through her hair again, cupping her skull to tilt up towards him. "He can be a fucking miser."

"Prove him wrong," she husked; those pink lips danced across his neck and jaw, setting it with a groan. "Show him up. Make me scream so loud he knows he can't--"

He placed one finger on her greedy lips. "We can't, not tonight," he gazed at her with strained eyes; she was ready, willing and angry; but he wasn't going to let one-time hate sex get in the way of how he felt. This time, he'd control his temper. This was worth waiting for. "When we fuck, I don't want it getting us killed."

She knew he was right, but the spoiled brat in her wanted sex and whined for not getting its way. She let her arms drop, her expression go sour with a pout. "Come talk to me again when you find your balls." Her mouth spoke for her urges though her heart said otherwise as she stomped her way back to her room, not evening noticing Negan's eye peeking from his chambers as she passed.

Chapter End Notes

I think this is the most Negan-esque I've ever written Negan; made me anxious just to write it!

Also Si gettin' it IN!

Like my stuff? Please comment; my schedule is starting to catch up with me so your words really so help me write faster.
Chapter 32

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Negan was succeeding in his efforts to isolate Delle, much to her dismay. Under his orders Simon had indeed taken on the responsibility of the latest outpost, and was away from Sanctuary for weeks at a time; she'd been pulled from nightly watch duty, but those nights were lonely without him. She tried to find solace in Sherry and Dwight, but with winter in full swing and food growing scarce, they were working themselves to the bones to keep Tina alive. With nearly no one to talk to and nothing but work to focus on, she put her energy into hating Negan; or at least convincing herself that she did. He'd always been the possessive type, even when she wasn't his to possess; but in the universe he'd created, he wasn't about to take a no. She wasn't completely certain she'd say it when offered. It was only a matter of when at this point; he'd begun straying closer, a graze of their hands, his fingertips on the small of her back. He was getting her accustomed to his touch again; and as much as it sickened her, she realized she had missed it. She was beginning to crave it; but she couldn't cave. No matter how those dimples made her shiver.

Negan still bothered to take her on runs, toting his 'little maniac' was one of his new favorite pass times; the sight of her cleaving through the dead was bone chilling for the average survivor and helped to cement the Saviors' status as 'total badass take-no-shit motherfuckers'. She was a powerhouse, stoic and sullen, a little demon at his side. Pity nobody saw that the murderous expression on her face was almost always meant for him.

The Kingdom was perhaps the cutest branch under Negan's empire; they'd built their defenses around an expansive school campus, being a society mostly of young people and children. Normally it fell to Gavin to collect from them, their usual take; but after a few weeks coming up short, Negan decided it was time to flex his muscle a bit.

"Your goddamn Majesty!" He cackled with an exaggerated bow to the patriarch of the Kingdom, Ezekiel. He was an older black man, carefully cultivated dreads framing a handsome face. He embodied his title of 'King', travelling with a small convoy of guards; Delle found she had difficult holding in a snicker at the sight of his 'knight' Jerry with his axe. He was just so surreal. "Bout time you and I had a fuckin' conversation, Ezie!"

"My apologies to you, Negan," he spoke like he'd stepped out of a Shakespeare play; she wondered if he was more a Macbeth or King Lear. "We're aware our offerings haven't mustered much confidence in recent weeks, bu--"

"Oh you're aware? That's fucking great. And here I was thinkin' you were on that throne with your thumb up your ass," Lucille swung in loose fingers, teasing and taunting. "So glad you're aware. Curious though, if you're so aware... why aren't you fucking doing anything about it?"

There he was, that imposing and posturing Negan, tempest made flesh; she saw the anxiety in the old King's eyes, knowing he must've seen the price of disappointing Negan first hand already. But moreover, she watched the guards. They had five men to their four, knights in hockey pads, all with some version of an outdated weapon to go with minor rounds of ammunition. The one that caught her eye was young, with a bullheaded face and angry eyes. 'Oh he's gonna be trouble. I can feel it.'

"W-we are exploring new expanses, Negan," Ezekiel had an unkillable smile as well, though his was
far kinder than the bared teeth Negan wore. "The winter has brought a chill to our gardens, and thusly we are scavenging as much as we can to apply to our donations."

"Well while I do control everything the light touches, I can't control the damn weather," he chuckled and got right up into the King's face, a few inches on the older man. "So maybe ya'll need to consider upping your time fucking management skills."

She could practically hear Ezekiel gulp in fear, his terror nearly cartoonish; though again her concern was on the fuming youth in his kingsguard. He was starting to get a little red under the collar, his hands twitching around a - 'fucking really?' - short sword. She wondered who Negan must've killed to be drawing out such a reaction.

"It's not like you're gonna hit a goddamn traffic jam or some shit," Negan was continuing on his diatribe, blissfully unaware of the impending attack; that or he didn't care. "Hell we're still finding useful fucking resources out there! What's your excuse?" He grinned and leaned back, Lucille broad on his shoulder. "Do I need to come by, teach another lesson?"

The levy snapped in the boy's eyes; whatever flame that had been burning in him was unleashed. "You fucking tyrant!" The kid shrieked, roaring towards him with his blade at the ready; but Delle was faster.

The clang of steel. The slice of flesh and bone. The thud of arrows hitting bodies. Blood from both sides mingled on the pavement as Negan's heart nearly stopped, time slowing as the scene became apparent.

Delle's Fang was buried deep in the foolish kid's neck, nearly severing it from its perch, nestled in a cleaved lung. But from some unseen vantage point, Ezekiel's guards had been watching, tightened bows at the ready; bows that had sent two arrows careening into her flesh. She stood proud, unwilling to collapse despite the bolts in her shoulder and lesser arm; a third arrow had found the enemy's ribcage, though if they'd shot true it would've pierced her belly. That could've been a killing blow. While her arm trickled, her shoulder gushed; whoever had loosed the arrow had struck something important.

"WHAT THE EVERLOVING FUCK!?!" The tempest in Negan unleashed, thunder and lightning in the form of words and actions falling free. Delle managed to retrieve her Fang from the boy's wound, though now the blood loss was beginning to be noticed. Ezekiel and his men pulled back, but did not run. They knew what could happen if they ran. "WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT EZEKIEL YOU BITCH ASS MONARCH!?!"

Negan's hand gripped the man's throat, near crushing his windpipe in white fury. "You can't control your fucking men!? Do I need to unseat you, find a new fucking KING!?!"His voice sounded like sandpaper on stone, rasping and livid.

"N-Negan..." she managed to mutter as her knee found the concrete, soaking in her victim's blood; Gavin rushed to her side, surveying her wounds. "Negan..."

His duty was to teach the Kingdom a lesson, right now wanting to burn it to the ground and salt the earth; but she was bleeding, more by the second. 'What will you do if she dies?' "I'll expect fucking triple next week, you dickless assholes. And the heads of whoever was brainless enough to shoot her." Gavin had snapped the long stalks of the projectiles, allowing for easier transport as Negan hoisted her up by her healthy arm, his other pointing Lucille back at them as they returned to their trucks.
Ezekiel couldn't remember a time Negan had looked so furious. Or a time when he had fallen back.

"C'mon Delle, you stay awake sweetheart," he smacked his hand against her cheeks lightly, trying to keep the color in her paling face. He had her across his lap as he drove, her back leant on his strong arm on the wheel to keep her upright. "We'll be back before you know it, get you all fixed up."

She chuckled through dry lips, her vision beginning to spot. "Always... always knew you'd be the end of me... you fuh-fucking geezer..." her head rested against his shoulder, the smell of her hair and blood clogging the air of the cab.

"Fuck!" Negan despaired, grabbing the radio on the dashboard, patching into the Savior frequency. "Carson better be ready to stitch the second these wheels roll in, we've got wounded!" He nudged at her with his arm, regretting it as she cried out over her newly shot holes. "C'mon Delle you're fine! You're fucking fine!"

Her thoughts began to spin, her blood beginning to seep into his clothes; 'He loves this jacket,' she thought, noting meaningless things. 'I hope he can get the blood out.' Her hand, now coated in her own red streams, caught his cheek in weakness; for a moment their eyes met, and she saw their lives together; the one they had destroyed, and the one she wished they'd had. 'When did we get so old?' She wondered, her eyes studying the salt in his salt and pepper scruff. "I fucked up, didn't I..." she groaned, her eyes closing.

"Delle? Delle! Just hold the fuck on you little shit!"

Chapter End Notes

Ruh roh.

Please leave a comment if you like, they help to keep me writing!! ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 33

Chapter Notes

Extra long chapter today! You guys are the best and I LOVE your input!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It was like floating in a sea of clouds; thick, soft but weighty, her limbs sluggish and stuck as she wafted along. Her eyes felt closed but she could see for miles; not that there was much to see. Flashes of light, the odd still frame of a memory. She drifted in no meaningful direction, aloft in nothing; until stars began to fill her vision, a black night of white cosmos surrounding her little by little. 

"Delle," she could hear a voice calling, familiar, welcoming. Why couldn't she see where it came from, why couldn't she reach it? "Delle, let go."

"Where am I?" Was her first question; she had countless more, but she wouldn't receive many answers. Not now.

"You're nowhere you're supposed to be," a different tone, a meaner octave, still something that reminded her of a memory she couldn't grasp. "Get out of here."

"How?" Was she supposed to control her direction in a place that seemed to have no end?

"Let go, darling," where had she heard this voice before? Feminine, older; something her ears hadn't listened to since her childhood. "You're not done."

"I'm not holding on to anything," she tried to move but found no give. Where was she supposed to go? Why couldn't she go on floating? "How do I leave?"

"Let me help you," Then she felt a different sensation; hands on her shoulder and arm, searing, shooting pain deep in her skin. Her eyes opened to meet a pair of honey brown, soft and gentle. She'd never seen them so calm. "He still needs you, Delle."

The light was cold and blinding, buzzing with electricity. The sound of it was the first thing she recognized, followed by burning agony in the same spots those hands had touched her. 'Oh right,' her mind began to piece together her reality. 'Dead walk the earth. Negan's empire. I got shot,' her heavy eyes lifted, following the patchwork of gauze that covered her wounds. 'Who the fuck uses a bow and arrow?'

"Ah good, our little sleeping Beauty is up!" A voice behind her made her jolt, not thinking of her injuries until they sang with pain. Craning her neck she saw a tired looking man in a lab coat, regarding her with a forced smile.

"Who the hell are you?" She grunted and coughed, her throat feeling dry as desert. 
"My name is Doctor Carson," he explained, sitting in a chair opposite to the bed she was in; she realized it wasn't her own, the room was too big, too sterile. An infirmary? "Negan brought you through after you took some arrows. You had lost a large amount of blood by the time he got you here; was touch and go for a bit."

She stared at him, taking long seconds to fully comprehend what he was saying. She'd been there three days, so far; by the last Negan had been pulled away but had strict orders to be notified as soon as she woke. Something in her wished he'd stayed.

"Rest for now, Delle. I'll see to contacting Negan, and maybe some food in your belly." Carson left her then, off to give the head honcho the good news.

"You got shot?" A weak, familiar voice filled her space, placing it as Tina's; Delle had a roommate in the recovery wing. She looked over to see the young woman, cheeks nearly hollowed and looking a ghastly palour of white.

"Tina," she gave a nod, pushing up with her healthy arm. "Some medieval times renaissance faire reject shot me with a bow n' arrow - I shit you not - a goddamn bow and arrow!" As her energy returned so did her spark, feeling more like herself and forgetting that cloudy, endless sea.

Tina's eyes grew wide, followed by an array of giggles over the idea of it all. "That's ridiculous; someone read Robin hood one too many times."

"Turns out his band of merry men aren't quite so fucking merry," she sighed and pointed to her bandaging, eliciting proper laughter. She studied her roommate briefly; her skin bordered in sallow, her eyes exhausted. Sherry and Dwight were working hard, but they couldn't seem to keep up.

"Diabetic shock again?"

The laughter died and the shy Tina was back, staring into her lap like a punished child. "Yeah...it's hard to get the right nutrients and all that, given the weather." She looked like she was trying to curl up in a ball so tight that she'd disappear.

Delle pulled a face, wondering what she could get away with in order to help. For now she could only offer support, reaching across her sick bed to take Tina's hand from her own. She still felt those slender, failing fingers holding hers as fatigue took her again.

"...she's on a heavy dose of painkillers... naproxen... best we can do..."

"...will she live..."

"...she'll need to be monitored... safely..."

"...move her... I'll keep her safe..."

"...she should stay here..."

"I'll keep her safe."

When Delle opened her eyes again, the buzz of electricity had disappeared. She'd been changed from her bloodied clothes into an unfamiliar top and pants; it was darker as well, later in the day. When she tried to move she felt dull throbs in place of pain, but her head felt thick, her limbs heavy.
'Somebody said painkillers...’ She tried to recall but found herself coming up short. Her vision, hazy and clouded, recognized nothing of the room around her. Large, fantastically appointed; the bed she was in firm and well dressed in soft sheets and blankets. This was a room fit for a king. Or a tyrant.

'Oh no.'

And there he was; like Simon's room, a living room set sat against a wall, a plush leather couch bearing Negan's sleeping form.

'At least he didn't presume to sleep with me,' her rational mind reasoned.

'Why didn't he?' Asked her devils.

His chest rose and fell in a steady rhythm, deep in sleep, though his eyes looked hollow and fatigued. It was a strange sight, seeing him out of character; he had a blanket over him, old, ratty and plaid, just a tshirt underneath that. He looked so painfully vulnerable, so exposed. 'I always loved him in those moments.'

'No you didn't, dumbass.'

She tried to wet her lips with her tongue but found herself cotton mouthed; she was in luck though, seeing a glass of what she guessed was water on a bedside table. It took some wriggling to bring her body close enough to reach it, though she managed; what she didn't was grasping the cup, the minor weight of the glass feeling like a ton as it slipped from her fingers, smashing and splattering across the polished concrete.

"Fuck." She groaned, throwing her face into a pillow. Delle and weak were never synonymous with each other.

"Well hi there, you little shit," she looked back up to see Negan, rubbing sleep from his face as he brought himself up; his blanket had been covering elastic waisted sweats, something comfortable in his privacy. He padded his way over, careful of the shards littering his floor, the bed compressing as he sat near her feet. "Gave me a fuckin' scare, didn't you."

Her thoughts were still uneven and mismatched, a side effect of whatever drug the good doctor had pumped into her. "I fucked up, huh Coach?" She slurred, struggling to turn onto her back; even in her drugged state she knew it best to keep her eye on him.

"You sure did," he chuckled, letting his hand drift across her ankle under his comforter; he wasn't sure if it was because of the medication, but she didn't pull away. "Saved my fuckin' bacon in doing so, though."

"Somebody had to," she mumbled, her uninjured arm reaching to rub her eyes. "Your mouth was gonna get you hurt."

"Says the expert on the subject." He smiled as she huffed a strained laugh, her eyes meeting his.

"Am I wrong or is this your room?" She wondered allowed, letting her bettering sight cast around the chambers.

"Gold star for you, Miss Delle," he chuckled, looking around with her. "Swanky digs huh?"
"Only the best... this is weird for me." She said bluntly, her mouth loose and honest with her high.

He grimaced, his grip on her ankle tightening. "I wanted to keep an eye on you, safest place to do that is here. I can just as quickly take your ass back down to the infirmary if you're gonn--"

"Oh stop, calm down," she rolled her eyes. "I just mean... I've never been in your bed before."

It was a strangely candid statement, his brows raising with a laugh; but it was true. In honesty, things they'd never done were happening all around them; she was in his house, sleeping in his bed. So many things they'd never done before.

"How is it we're still finding firsts after all this time?" He wondered aloud, letting himself slide up the mattress to her hip; still seated, but took her hand gently. 'Who cares if it is the drugs, she's letting me touch her.'

"We were never exactly conventional, Negan," she murmured, her well medicated hand barely registering his; she had to look down to see him holding it. "I'm not your usual fare."

He nodded, she was right; most women, even now, were attractive to him out of subservience, being soft and sweet and gentle. Delle was the anomaly, a phenomenon in raven hair; that nature, that roughness only ever worked for him on her. She was a perfectly executed experiment, a one in a million chance.

"So how bad was it?" Pulled from his pondering he made a quizzical expression; it lead to her gesturing to the bandaging on her arm.

"Was pretty nasty. Hit some major vein or something, according to the Doc. Wasn't listening," he admitted with a shrug. "You were bleeding like a stuck pig, I can tell you that."

She closed her eyes and gave a singular nod, breathing in. "Those Kingdom fucks are gonna have some explaining to do when I catch up with them."

"The heads of whoever shot you are coming along with their next offering," he gave his fingers a squeeze, certain she'd pull away with what he had to say next. "But you... you're not going out there again."

And just like that her appendage snapped away, drowsy fury and confusion in her eyes. "This is bullshit!" She was bordering on a tantrum now, her fists tightening. "I think fucking not!" She said haughtily, nonplussed at his audacity. "I'll heal up and all that but as soon as I'm good I'm going back out there."

"This isn't a discussion, Delle," he growled despite his attempts to keep his temper in check. "I'm not going to be responsible for you dying. You're staying right here, we'll find you something to work on--"

"I said no!" She used all her strength to push herself up, sitting and wincing. "So I got shot! What's the big deal, I'm fine! Do you bench every goddamn Savior with a paper cut!?"

"Saviors who get shot don't often live to tell," he shrugged but maintained his stoic gaze. "I'm not having that happen to you. Not ever."

"This is bullshit!" She was bordering on a tantrum now, her fists tightening. "I'm fucking useful! I know I am! Would you up and retire if you got nicked by an bullet or some shit!?"
He was silent and still for a moment, his expression hard and exasperated. Her mouth dropped slightly when he stood suddenly, hauling his tshirt over his form, tossing it aside. 'Oh no oh no oh no oh-- oh...'

She knew his physique well; years had added white to his hair, diluted his ink. But that wasn't the focus; no, what she focused on were his scars. White, knotted flesh left from bullets, long drags of knives, rough ridges from uncountable scrapes. They spoke a truth of his that she hadn't realized, that she'd been ignoring; you don't wind up a warlord without fighting for it.

"This one," he began, drawing his finger across a line down his hip. "Was from a fucker in Washington, thought he could torture me," his other hand went to his side, tracing a patch of worn skin. "This was from falling through a compromised roof, wind knocked outta me and two broken ribs," he found another mark, harsh and mean, across his right pec. "Some bitch tried to tear my heart out with her teeth - she was still alive, obviously," he clarified with a shrug. "And the bullet holes, fuck, they're from all over."

She stared at the novel of a body he owned now, a painful story of the world since it's end. "Why... why are you showing me?" She breathed, dragging her eyes to his.

He sat back, closer now, his hand supporting him on the mattress, stretched across her waist. "I have lived a life since we parted ways, darlin'; and I have paid my way through flesh and blood and sweat to get to the top of the heap," his free hand caught her chin, her face learning and studying. "And I will not see the worst happen to you as it did me."

She understood his fears; even sympathized. If she'd been present for any one of those injuries, she might've reacted the same way. Was that why she moved so quickly to defend him from that stubborn kingsguard? Was there still something inside her that couldn't bear to see him hurt? Nonetheless, she was stubborn too; she was not his to keep, and she was no one's to cage.

"Negan, let me keep on the runs, please," she begged, a sad desperation in her tone. "Please? I'll be more careful, I... I'll only act when you say so. Don't keep me locked up in here; I'll go stir crazy stuck here. Please."

She got away with murder when she blinked those big eyes, lashes fluttering in that manipulative dance. 'So much for your plan.' "...you'll only act when I say?" He asked, a look of skepticism on his features. The thought of Delle Cornish, troublemaker extraordinaire, bending to his will had an undeniable allure. 'Wonder if that'll apply behind closed doors, too."

"Cross my fucking heart," she nodded rapidly, flinching as the movement put pressure on her shoulder wound. "I swear. Please don't tie me down here; I'll do what you say," her teeth sank into her lip before her next promise, knowing how much he'd wanted these words. "I'll... I'll follow your rules."

'Fuck.' He felt a stir in his crotch, her admission unusual and arousing. He let his head drop, his hand rubbing over his features before catching in his beard, eyes pained and searching hers. "Let's... let's see how you are once you're not full of holes." It was the only compromise he could think of at the time, but seemed to sooth her; her body relaxed, eyes less stormy.

"Thanks, you fucking geezer." He was still as stone when her functioning arm wrapped around his neck, tugging him close to hug her. It felt so innocent, so grateful; he couldn't remember the last time someone had done this to him. His own arms coiled at her waist, letting his bare chest press to hers,
eyes shut in her hair, wishing he could turn back the years. ‘She smells just like I remember.’

Chapter End Notes

Negan's beginning to realize he can't lose Delle twice... but how far will he bend for her?

Like my stuff? Please leave a comment, they keep my inspired and typing away!!
♡♡♡♡
Chapter 34

It had been two days of bed rest so far, but it already felt like an eternity to Delle's restless spirit. Negan was a drill Sargeant of a nurse, a sharp word or look sending her back to bed if she even attempted getting up, a sullen pout meeting him. This was his chance for time, as much as it was hers to mend. Conversations struggled at first, Delle still slipping in and out as per her medicine dosage, but with effort and newly discovered patience, he opened her up little by little.

"Do you remember that little fucking cunt I punched in the throat during warm ups?" She laughed out the question, her hands now easily trusted with water.

"Which one? You always favored a good throat punch." He chuckled, tossing up a stale almond to catch in his waiting mouth.

"That blond bitch, with her gaggle of airheads. Rachel I think." She nodded and stole a nut from the bowl in his lap; she wasn't sure when he'd let himself curl up beside her, but she didn't seem to be objecting.

"Hm, can't say it rings a bell. I can't remember every poor sap you kicked the crap out of." He shrugged, crunching away. He felt like it was working; chipping away at that hard, battle worn shell she'd created because of him, fervently determined to reach the core within; memories seemed to work, but it was a challenge to pick the right one. The wrong choice would lead them down a path of unforgettable anger or betrayal; every step was calculated and vital.

"I'm gonna get fucking bedsores, the way you have me glued to these sheets," she chided, her body splayed across the mattress in annoyance. "And who the fuck wants that?"

He glanced up from his place at his desk, pouring over ledgers; busy work would tide him over until she was well again. "You're not gonna get bedsores," he spoke absentmindedly. "You're resting. God knows if I give you an inch you'll take a fucking mile."

She grumbled, antsy. "Can I at least go sit in the showers? It's been five damn days and I am fucking rank. Pretty sure I've still got blood caked in a few places." She knew, at least, her oily hair still bore some dried up blood.

The grin the suggestion elicited was elated but sat on the edge of sinister, finally pulling Negan up from his desk. "I can do you one better, sweetheart," he winked as he crossed the floor, seeking out a door that she had assumed was a closet. "Gimme a few minutes, doll; I'm going to blow your fucking mind."

"No way, ' No way is Negan gonna waste fresh water on a
"Bath time, sweetheart!" He practically sang it, strolling out of what was now confirmed to be a bathroom. That wolfish grin only grew wider at her gobsmacked expression, reaching her side to cast off her blankets, scooping her up like a doll.

"I can walk by my fucking self Negan!" She shuffled around in his arms, not wanting a reminder of how delicate he made her feel.

"I am well aware, darlin', but you don't have to," her weakened state meant her struggling was fairly ineffective, his arms strong around her as he brought her through to his personal bath.

Sure enough, a tub, as promised, was full and steaming hot, the water fresh and clear. She was surprised by the cleanliness of the room, though guessed he had some servant to clean up after him.

"Or his wives do it."

With a shudder he set her down by the tub, her legs a bit wobbly as she gripped the edge. "What, no rubber duck? Disappointing, Negan." She spoke wryly, his favorite.

"Don't be greedy, you little brat," he leaned in, tugging at the edge of her tank top, only to have her pull away, an untrusting look in her eye. "Oh I'm sorry, raise your hand if you can lift both arms by your damn self," he raised his, knowing that she couldn't do the same, not in this state. She scowled, but didn't speak. "Yeah that's what I fucking thought." He returned to his task, easing the thankfully stretchy top up and over her head, sliding it from her arms without much unneeded movement. She locked away a shiver, eyes challenging his as she stood bare from the waist up, knowing the bottom half would soon follow.

"Goddamn, you are still pretty coated, aren't ya?" He mused, pretending to study the dried blood across her torso, when he was really just remembering her body and learning the new, minute differences. He carefully unwrapped her bandages, the sight of her stitches and angry scabs still stinging some long thought dead part of him. She was thinner than she was then, but somehow it only made her tits look fuller. 'Lucky girl,' his demons praised, his attention turning to the shorts on her waist, thumbs hooking in to drag them down. 'Lucky you.'

There was something strangely familiar about him crouched down, sliding her pants from her legs; though it had been in a monstrously different context. 'It doesn't have to be, 'her immoral conscious purred, wicked thoughts crossing her mind. 'Say the word and he'll do it all over again.' She suppressed a sigh and stepped from her shorts, naked and proud, Negan taking a moment before returning to his full height to drink her in. Every scar, every difference, they were just as lovable as the rest of her.

"I-I can get in by myself." She muttered, using her strong arm to steady herself as she turned, stepping down into the water; boiling hot, near burning, just the way she liked it. Every inch of her body seemed to relax as it hit the heat, sinking down to stretch her legs long, head tilting back and in spite of herself she groaned in delight.

"Heh, just what the doctor ordered, huh," he smirked with a raised brow, letting himself fall back to his knees, arms against the porcelain. The water just barely obscured her body, still a sight to behold. "Still like to be boiled alive, right?"

"Only way to bathe," she hummed, stretching her healthy shoulder in the bathwater. "I, uh, think I
can take it from here, Coach."

"You plan on only washing one half of this hotness, then? You need help, get on board, darlin'," he scoffed as she sank deeper, her mouth just under the surface in a pout, her hair fanning out in tendrils. "I'm not gonna fuckin' hurt ya."

"That's not what I'm worried about." She admitted, watching as he produced a sponge, seemingly from nowhere, dipping it into the bath and rubbing a bar of soap into it thoroughly. It was his personal soap, smelling warm and spicy as he did. It'd do its job for now.

"I may be an asshole, but I still give a shit about you doll," he murmured as he pulled her arm from under the surface, dragging the now sudsy sponge across her skin; it was rough, but not unwelcome. "You keep forgetting that... I brought you in here, gave you a place, saved your ass when you got shot. Does that not sound like somebody who gives a rat's ass about you?"

That was blatantly true; for goodness sake she was in his tub, receiving a sponge bath. He was treating her like royalty, as he'd promised; not that it was an achievement for her. Fragility wasn't a quality she held highly, but it seemed like a necessity in the situation. He was gentle, for now, and the soothing, scalding water was working wonders on her aches. She only flinched slightly when the sponge dragged across the stitches on her arm, drawing in a sharp breath. "Easy tiger." He snickered while she glared daggers.

"I'm fine," she snapped, brows set and knit. "And you didn't bring me in here; Simon did."

He stiffened, stare glowering into her face. 'She doesn't look away from you,' his devil mentioned. 'She's not afraid.' "And like everyone else in my fucking house, who is he?"

She ground her teeth together, knowing the answer he wanted to hear. "Negan." She grumbled, face twisting in anger.

"Oh so I did bring you in here then?" He wondered, pressing the sponge across her chest, neck, straying a little below the surface. "I pulled you from that goddamn wasteland?"

He just barely grazed her breast and she shuddered despite her best efforts; he noticed. "I guess you did..." she mumbled, fighting a losing battle against her urges. 'Simon, remember Simon.' "Did you tell him what happened to me?"

His envy flared, letting the sponge go and float from his grasp. "Why would he want to know, doll face?" His voice was cold and dark as the winter outside. "Don't tell me you're spreading these legs for that dick?" She yelped as his mitt grabbed the flesh of her thigh, crashing through the water, hard and possessive.

"N-no -- but it's not your business," she hissed, refusing to break her stare from his. His sleeve was dampening with the water but he couldn't have cared less. "I'm not your wife, Negan."

"You're damn right you're not," was that sadness in his tone? She didn't have time to place it as a flood of shock and arousal hit her, his hand cupping her sex. "But you are mine."

Against her better judgement she moaned; it had been ages since she'd touched herself, and a man hadn't dared lay a finger on her since...
How long had it been?

Her second instinct told her to run; attack, rip his arm off if she had to. But somewhere between the sedation and seduction she stilled; he felt so familiar, so uniquely 'home'. It felt incredibly wrong; but so fucking good all at once.

"Can't fucking lie to me down here, Delle," his voice was low and pleased in his chest, his fingers catching her slick, a clear, different wetness from the bath. "Oh she remembers me."

"D-Don't flatter yourself, you fucking geezer," she tried to sound angry but only came out needy. "Any port in a storm, bitch."

"Mouthy little-- you can say that but I know this pussy pretty goddamn well," his fingers slid up, splitting around her clit before sliding back down in full, forceful circles. The bath splashed when she writhed, her head leaning back against the edge in stolen pleasure. "And I know what you fucking like."

"P-please..." she whimpered, those expert digits working over her folds in practiced perfection. He knew how she liked it alright; aggressive, rough, mean pressure that guaranteed earth shattering climaxes. She hated that he knew that about her, but couldn't ask him to stop. "L-like that age addled brain remembers sh-shit about me."

She was putting all her fight in her words while her body dropped it's defenses, breath turning to pants under his works. His second hand curled into her damp hair, keeping his eye level with hers. "I could forget my own name and still remember every fucking inch of you, you little shit," his hand slid down, ring and middle curving in and up, plodding at her sweet spot. Her mouth formed an O, following with a slur of curses, much to his delight. "And you remember me, too."

She had to give him that; she knew every inch backwards and forwards, and her body remembered his touch with every classic sensation. Not that she was going to tell him that. "Mm... what was your name again?"

He smiled but was growing tired of the game. "You know my name," he snarled, twisting his fingers and forcing a groan. "Just like I know you. I know you inside and out, darlin'. You can't deny all the times I made you come, how many different ways you screamed my name," another thrust, another moan. "This body has my prints all fuckin' over it and nothing will ever wash that away."

"F-fuck..." she didn't have it in her to argue further; it had been so long, she was dying for release, a release unique to him. She found her hips rolling against his actions, years to make up for; her muscles were starting to tighten, walls caving so much he could barely wriggle his digits. "What's my name?"

"You want to come, good girl?" He husked, watching his old flame come apart at the seams. His hand worked her over furiously, years to make up for; her muscles were starting to tighten, walls caving so much he could barely wriggle his digits. "What's my name?"

"G-god, don't stop..." she panted, all but ignoring his question.

"Say it, Delle," he commanded, second hand pulling her hair back, her eyes directly under his. "Fucking' scream it."

That voice, those hands, he still had the same talents he'd held years ago, and she still melted under it
all. She was too far gone, her matter overruling her mind as her orgasm hit like a ton of bricks. "N-
Negan...!" She screamed, just like he wanted, arching so hard and body convulsing so fiercely, she hardly registered the stitches tearing on her shoulder. The water swirled with fresh blood, a light trickle, her body soaked and spent in gasps.

"That's right, sweetheart," he pulled from her, muscles still spasming as his fingers left her, brought to his lips for the minor flavor that dwindled despite the water and blood. 'Perfect.' "Don't you fucking forget it."

She was quivering, still half hazed as she watched him with determination; there was still a conversation they had to have, their tryst a brief, mistaken (but enjoyable) interlude. "N-Negan..." she mumbled, catching his attention, finally noticing the fresh blood in the water.

"Shit; worked you over too hard, didn't I? Guess I got carried away," He chuckled and helped her to lean forward, checking the wound; it wasn't completely reopened, just a few stitches had pulled. He whisked up a ratty hand towel, pressing it to the effected area. "We'll get Carson up, soon as you're ready."

"Negan, I wanted to talk to you about you something." She managed to string together her words into a full sentence, her purpose finding her again.

"What do you need, sweet thing?"

"I want you to take another wife."

'Holy shit,' his heart leapt in hope, thinking he'd finally turned her around. 'Is she really--'"

"Not me, though."

"What the fuck?"

Chapter End Notes

Yeeeah this was pretty dub con; but damn if I didn't love writing it.

Please leave a comment if you like what I write; I love a good conversation and they let me know someone out there likes this. ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 35

Chapter Notes

Stick around til the end for an author's note!

Also I drew more fanart of this fic because it's basically my life now. Included Fang this time!

http://i.imgur.com/wSpJkUf.jpg

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Before...

The game worked out to be a tie, in the end; though they were almost forfeited when Tony Sanderson took a swing at the other team's first baseman. He'd been reamed out for it, and after a so far undefeated season, the bus was downtrodden and pouty on the ride home. Again Delle was in the back, watchful eyes on sleepy and grumpy heads nodding and resting against windows. Even Negan didn't seem himself, stewing over the break even.

'They didn't even lose, fucking babies,' she muttered inward, eyes rolling to study the passing horizon. The last night's events were still on her mind, heavy and complicated. 'Did you do it? Did you lock your heart up tight enough?' The devils asked, though she had no certain answer. Sure, the sex had been fantastic, just as it always was, but she couldn't help feeling cold failure having woke up wrapped in his arms; hers holding him just as tightly. Even telling herself she didn't feel things here didn't mean her subconscious wasn't feeling them. 'I shouldn't have let him kiss me,' she scolded, watching warehouses swing past as they sped down the freeway. 'Couples who shop at fucking farmer's markets kiss; we don't kiss,' she glanced up to the back of his head, chewing at her lip. 'No matter how good he is at it.' Her eyes caught him move, swinging an arm across the seat back to speak to the kids behind him; he seemed serious, more stern than she'd seen him since her time in his class. Their eyes met briefly and she swore she saw a light flash in his eyes, mouth tug at the corners before he turned back. 'Did mine do the same?'

A chorus of parents waited in the school parking lot when they finally pulled in for the night, sun just setting for the day. Delle knew as well as Eric that their father wouldn't be there to collect them; he didn't leave his barstool if he could help it.

"Better luck next time, boys," She shrugged, patting her brother's shoulder with support. "Maybe next time Coach won't run ya'll into the ground the night before."

A few of the boys snickered and smiled, though most remained sullen and sour. She could've sworn she felt Eric's posture stiffen slightly under her hand, but brushed it off.

"You kids get home safe." Negan called from the bus, where a set of worried parents were talking
his ear off. Eric gave a confident wave, but he could do nothing but watch as Delle's ass swayed away and out of his vision again. 'Damn.'

"What're you feeling for dinner, Fang?" Despite an exhausting weekend for the both of them, she could at least manage a meal for the poor kid.

"Whatever's easiest, Delle," he muttered, going to his room to drop off his overnight bag. "I'll be out in a minute." He called as the door swung shut. With a roll of her eyes and a toss of her own bag onto the sofa, she moved to the kitchen, digging through cupboards for something easy. Spaghetti would do.

She had the sauce simmering and water bubbling by the time Eric emerged from his room, still in a sour mood. He sank into a seat at the table, arms crossed and expression stormy.

"There'll be other games, Fang," she tried to sound supportive, but was pretty sure it came out as annoyed. "Technically, you guys didn't lose. Still undefeated!" She threw a beam at him, diligently stirring at her pot of sauce, adding spices haphazardly. Delle had a talent for making up meals on the fly; even bargain basement canned sauce could taste five star if given the time and effort.

"Yeah." He mumbled, letting his forehead rest on the pressboard table. She found herself worrying; she'd never seen him react so poorly to a loss. He'd even managed to come in last place during middle school track heats with a smile on his face.

"When's your next game? I'm sure you'll fuck the next team into next week." 'Cheerful, Delle, be cheerful'. The pasta spread out into the boiling water once added; she could leave things be for a moment and sit with her brother, which she did.

"A week from now," he replied, raising his head, but if anything he looked more put off. There was something in his warm eyes that didn't look like him, it looked hard, maybe even scared. "Can I... can I ask you something, sis?" He bit down on his lip, waiting for permission.

She shrugged. "Of course, kiddo -- we don't need to go over the sex talk again do we? Thought we covered that years ago." She giggled but he bristled.

"Still ship shape on that," he tried to force a smile that looked utterly artificial. "No, um...so Saturday night..."

'Oh no.'

"I-I had a headache around midnight or something, so uh... I thought I'd come by your and-and Coach's room, see if you had any aspirin..."

'Shit. Shit shit shit.'

"...I... I heard some things."

The earth had vanished around her, nothing but cold, cruel darkness, a kitchen table, and her brother's concerned, wide eyes staring into her, hoping his suspicions were untrue. 'This is what you get for being a slut'. Her angels were cackling.

"What did you hear, Fang?" She maintained her cool despite her entire being vibrating in terror. Hopefully he didn't see it.
"W-well I can't say for sure, it was kind of muffled," he replied. Maybe this could be her loophole. "I think umm... I heard you? With a... a guy." 'He wants to say Negan, I can see it,' she thought to herself, hands surprisingly still in her lap. 'Up to me to make it not him.'

She gave her best impression of Negan's confident, afterglow smile. "Well... yeah, I mean... I had some fun on Saturday night."

He looked completely aghast. "Delle! How--how could you!? He's married; he was your teacher!! Why--"

"Whoa, what do you mean? I'd never even met the guy before!" She waved her hands as if to clear the smoke from her deception. His face stilled, more confusion than disgust now.

"What...what?" He asked, his originally concocted idea falling apart. "B-but it... it was Coach's room..."

"He was down in the bar, kiddo," when had she got so good at spinning lies? 'I have a great teacher.' "We went down after you kids went to bed; just unwind a little. I met a guy," she forced a little heat in her face to sell the story. "And after a little begging, Negan agreed to let me have the room for awhile."

He didn't look as horrified as he had, but there was still some worry in his face. She rose from her seat, preparing to drain her pasta and toss it with the sauce; acting normal meant being normal. "Was kind of shocked, really; half expected I'd wind up blowing the guy in the alley before Negan would let go of his bed."

Eric pulled a face and let something between a snort and a laugh leave his lips. 'Almost there.' "So... he was just in the bar?"

"Bingo," she winked as the pasta steamed, pouring her sauce into the mix. "Why do you think he was so tired today? I, uh, wasn't done til about two in the morning." 'Well at least that part's true'.

He wanted to believe her so badly. Delle, his sister, his guardian, wouldn't be running around with a married man; would she? She and Negan had always had a tumultuous relationship, and he knew the way men looked at her; he'd even caught his Coach sneaking peeks here and there. Maybe that's all it was; maybe that's what he could let it be.

"Alright..." he finally said, Delle setting a plate of dinner in front of him before sitting down to her own. "Well if you're gonna hook up with some guy, not before a big game, okay? The Coach looked like he didn't get a wink of sleep."

'That's because he didn't.' Her mind shot back to the night before, the memory of his head between her thighs still fresh and exciting. It didn't read on her face though, as she stuffed it with a mouthful of spaghetti and a laugh. 'He's bought it, I'm safe.'

'For how long?'

The question loomed in her mind over dinner, while washing the dishes - insistent that Eric get to bed after such a tough weekend - and when she finally retired to bed. She stared up at her ceiling, the room still with blue grey shadows of night outside. 'I was sloppy,' she reasoned, nails digging into her hand. 'If I want this to work I have to be more careful.' She ran her hands through her hair, a
habit picked up through stress. *Is he even really worth it?* Her morals were posing the question again, as they did almost every night. And almost every night it was a yes; she loved the way she felt when he looked at her, how he touched her. He never tried to stave off her fire, he'd take her flames and burn her back. They were two sides of the same coin, cut from the same cloth. It had taken time to see it, but once she had it had been clear as day; even the stormy expressions or silent cussing she could remember from her school days, the signs had been there. She'd spent so long as a lone wolf in her own town, fighting against the tides, she had taken so long to realize one of her own pack was right there with her.

*Why are you thinking about him like that?* That bloody angel on her shoulder cooed, *'thought it was all about sex, not some match made in hell.'* Her palms pressed against her eyes, tired and frustrated. *'It's only sex. That's all I can allow it to be.*' She almost jumped when she heard the chime of her phone at her bedside. She rolled and retrieved it, flipping it open to find a text message waiting.

10:37 -you up?-

"Could he be more cliché." She muttered quietly, bringing her thumbs to the keypad, scrawl in out a response.

10:38 -yea. Can't sleep. What do you want?- 10:38 -I can't text my favorite girl just because?-

*Favorite girl, right -- cuz he's got choices.*' Her mind had daggers at the ready with thoughts like that. She hated how her skin flushed at the idea of him, somewhere off thinking about her. *Stop it.*

10:40 -free country. Thought you'd be drowning your sorrows in a whiskey or two by now. Tie game and all.- 10:41 -after last night I don't have one damn thing to be sad about.-

*He has to know.* She affirmed, knowing they'd need to keep both their stories straight to keep their life secret.

10:42 -about that...- 10:42 -awe don't tell me you're having second thoughts. You were a fucking firecracker last night.- 10:44 -we should really meet. We need to talk about something.-

A long pause followed, and she had to wonder what he was thinking; only to scoff in disbelief at the text she next received.

10:47 -shit, you're pregnant.- 10:47 -NO, DUMBASS. Despite your efforts I keep my shit handled in that department.-

They'd never discussed it, but it was a fact; Delle had seen to birth control since she'd turned 16, for safety's sake. A little part of her was surprised it'd taken him so long to even think of that possibility; not that there was one.

10:48 -well fuck, I don't know! What's the matter then?- 10:49 -it's Fang. He knows something’s up with us. Heard us.-
An even longer pause this time. Her mind wove an image of him deleting their texts, her number, any trace they'd ever even known each other outside of school; she couldn't blame him if he had.

**10:55 -are you free now? I'll come pick you up.-**

He was more concerned than she had assumed. She sat straight up, listening to the quiet of the house, making sure Eric was down for the night. It was a small window but she had to go for it.

**10:56 -yeah, give me 5 minutes. Meet me at Sullivan and Berkley.-**

She guessed he had some access to her home address, but if anyone saw his truck at the wrong place at the wrong time, it could spell disaster for the both of them. Sullivan and Berkley were close, but unassuming. That intersection would work.

Chapter End Notes

Hello my wonderful readers,

Just needed to let you know that posting might be slowing down for 2 weeks; life is going to be rather hectic and require my full attention. I'll write as much as I can when I can but I apologize in advance if I can't keep up with the one-a-day schedule.

Thanks for your understanding, drop me a comment if you like what you're reading !

For now, enjoy drama, suspicion and Negan's general dickbaggery♡♡♡♡
Before...

It's a strange phenomenon, standing in a place you've been thousands of times, feeling completely foreign to the location; not as if you don't know where you are, but as if your very being was never meant to be there.

That's how Delle was feeling under the flickering streetlights, leaning against a telephone pole at the crossroads of Sullivan and Berkley. The area, mostly low income housing and abandoned storefronts of bad ideas, was dead silent; though in their sleepy little town almost everywhere was.

'For so called Timberwolves nobody's up all that late.' She noted, thankful for the mundane living their lives around her. She paced the quiet corner in a circle, mind whirling away and wondering what was keeping him; it'd only been fifteen minutes, in which time she'd dressed, left home and made their rendezvous. So where was he?

As if on cue, headlights caught her shadow and she turned, the silhouette of his old pick up glinting in the dark. She saw a hand wave from his window, scurrying across the road to the passenger side.

"Evenin' beautiful," he crooned; that personality couldn't be halted, no matter what the threat. "Never picked up a hitchhiker before."

" Shut the fuck up, Negan," she snapped back, settling against his seat. "Drive."

"Where to?"

"I don't know, somewhere nobody will see us maybe? Fuck," she let her hands cradle her head as he pulled from the curb, making his way through the drowsy side streets he knew so well. A soft rock station - one she'd never expected him to be listening to - hummed along the radio. "Fuck fuck fuck."

"Calm down, Delle," that thick, rolling voice like thunder; somehow it soothed and irritated her all at once. "What'd Fang have to say?"

"He came by our room," she explained through her fingers, hiding away in mortification. "Said he... said he'd heard me. Around midnight."

He ran his tongue along the inside of his lip, nodding slowly. *Had her legs up over your shoulders right around then, you sly devil.* The demon in his ear was quick to congratulate him
on making her scream that loud, but the logic in him saw the danger of anyone finding out.

"What did you say?" Was the next, reasonable question.

"Told him I met some guy at the bar," she explained; why did his blood boil to think of her doing that? "Begged you to let me have the room, and you caved."

"Well that doesn't sound like me," he chuckled despite the situation. "I'm gonna let a lady like you go off with some prick in a seedy hotel bar? No sir-fucking-ree."

"It made more sense than 'Oh I'm just fucking my married ex-teacher!' Goddamn it!" A sob left her lips involuntarily, her body trembling with rage, disappointment and heartache. She barely realized he'd parked, some long abandoned dirt road off the edge of town, trees and bushes overgrown and providing good cover. Her hands were still at her face, trying to force the excess of emotions back into herself.

"Hey," it hardly sounded like him, yet had to be; he'd unclipped his seat belt, sliding over the bench to be as near to her as he could be. Gingerly, he let one arm drape her shoulders, and with no push back on her part, wound his other around her front to hold her tightly. "It's okay. I'm sorry."

Those words were all her tear ducts needed to unleash the torrent they held, her tears running across his jacket as she cried silently, but for a few utterances of curses under her breath. It felt freeing to let go, again the world had melted away; but this place was warm, comfortable, smelled like him. It was unlike her, of course; Delle held things in, let herself unravel when noone was looking. What made him so special that she'd let him see her fall apart? She clung to him, in spite of everything telling her not to, hands gripping at his leathers as he murmured soft assurances in her ear, those wide, strong hands stroking her back and keeping her tethered to the earth, lest she crumble away along with it.

"Fucking hell, Negan," she croaked, finding her words yet unwilling to pull from his embrace. "Fuck."

"I know, doll," he mumbled, letting his hand find her hair, smoothing it gently. "I'm sorry I laughed. I'm an asshole, I know."

"You are," she sniffled, finally leaning back; her eyes were puffy and skin red as she rubbed away her tears. "I just... I can't be the only one putting in effort if this is gonna continue."

His arm didn't leave her shoulder, his hand grasping hers with a soft stroke of his thumb on her skin. "You want this to continue?" He asked, in earnest. Half of him expected she'd dump him that night. He couldn't blame her if she did.

She sighed, letting her head rest against his arm to look up at his face. "Humiliatingly, yes," she breathed, eyes darting across the face of the man she'd fallen for, as much as she couldn't admit it. "You're goddamn addictive, you fucking geezer. I mean, I've tried to pull away, but... something pulls me back."

"I know what you mean," he agreed. "Much as I know I shouldn't, I feel for you... can't tell you why, but it makes me sick to even think of turning you away," shocked by his own candor, he shook his head, dipping forward to brush his lips against hers; it was somehow chaste and pure,
even amidst the sin their relationship thrived in. "Glad I haven't fucked all this up yet."

"Give it some time, I'm sure you'll find a way," there she was, that razored tongue. "We've got to be more careful." She reiterated the point of their meeting, which he agreed to with a nod.

"No more drunken hook ups then," he said playfully, though the kindness in his eye helped ease her worry. "We plan ahead. No more surprises; might kill a little romance, but that's a risk I'm willing to take."

She let her head lean into his shoulder, eyes shutting and breathing him in; she was far from forgiveness, but his proximity was helping. She could hardly believe he'd been able to sneak off from his wife...

"Hey how did you manage to sneak out, anyway?" She asked, although she didn't want to. She hated this side of her, the side that had to know the goings on of her lover's wife. His brow knit for a moment as his mouth tightened.

"Not hard to sneak off when I never went home," he shrugged, concerning himself with the woman in front of him. "Called her from the school; left a message. Never bothered getting back to me," she could hear the insult in his voice, the sense of abandonment. 'What a fool she must be'. "After last night... I had no fucking interest of going back to normal."

'Normal,' her mind repeated, her fingers dancing with his. 'What even is normal anymore?' His mouth covered hers, a palm cupping her cheek in an apology, of sorts. To her, it said 'I'm sorry for what I put you through'; what he meant was 'I'm sorry I can't give you all I want to'. Her lips parted with ease, her mouth receptive to his tongue, eager to taste her; that heady growl in his throat aligning the remainder of their evening. Her own digits tugged at his collar, pulling him closer; that bear of a man was snarling just for her, and that night, she could live with being torn apart.

"Where were you gonna sleep?" She panted, hands still locked on his leathers. He gave a sheepish grin, running a hand over his hair.

"Flatbed, probably," now she was laughing, her tears now of hilarity. 'At least she's happy'. "Don't knock it darlin', clear night like this? Fucking gorgeous."

She gave him a coy look, mind formulating a wicked idea. "Why don't you show me?" She purred, burrowing her face into his neck, drawing her teeth over his skin and reveling in the gruff groan he released.

"Can do, sweetheart," he gave her a quick peck, hopping from the drivers seat while she did the same on the passenger side, meeting him at the tail end of his truck. Flipping down the trunk edge she was pleasantly surprised to find how clean the flat bed proved to be; dull, matte metal ached under his weight as he made his way to a storage trunk he kept right up against the cab, producing a military quality sleeping bag and a pillow that could've passed as an antique. "Voila. Fucking palace, am I right or am I right?"

She hoisted herself up onto the truck's end, scoffing as he unraveled the bedding and laid it out, stretching out like a Tom cat. "You're a goddamn cave man, aren't you? All bare necessities?"

"Fuck you; boy scouts always come prepared." He gave a laugh and shot forward, tangling her in his arms and hauling her back against his chest; she yelped but it fell to laughter quickly.
"Boy scout, huh? I can just picture those spindly fuckin' legs in a set of shorts and a cute ass little kerchief," she leaned her chin against his collarbone, centering herself on him, her legs draping over either side of his hips. "Maybe even a little compass."

"Enrollment numbers would fucking skyrocket." He spoke confidently, pulling her up further to recapture her kiss; something new in his actions, something fragile. This rough hands moved like water, tugging at her red leather, eager to be free of it.

"What's the matter, scout? Eager to earn your friendliness badge?" She mocked and huffed as he turned her over, pleased to drag down her zipper and expose the tank top underneath. "And then some," he muttered, slipping the garment from her form, eagerly hauling her underlayer over her head as well; he could only be called giddy to find nothing underneath. "Oh Delle you sly devil."

She wondered why she found herself so pliable, so soon after being furious, sobbing; but she was in no questioning mood, not anymore. "Got ready in a hurry; must've slipped my mind," she shrugged her bare shoulders, hungrily repeating Negan's actions on him; his leathers joined hers, followed by his usual white tee. The night air was biting, but with his furnace of a body and the blanket beneath them, she couldn't have cared less. "Get rid of those pants, teach."

He liked her excitement, belt unbuckling as he kicked off his boots; she was doing the same, hurriedly doing away with her bottom half. His hand shot out as her thumbs dug into her panty line, both of them freezing up. "Hold your horses, Delle," his massive form perched above her, those long fingers taking their places on her waistband. "I like doin' this part."

'Stuff that look in his eye?' She wondered as the elastic fabric slid from her legs, joining their growing pile of clothes. He leaned up on his knees, hands sliding over her thighs, hips bathed in starlight. "Goddamn Delle, the things you do to me..."

'Stuff?' Her logical mind wondered as he leaned into her skin, stubble scratching as he mouthed kisses up her leg, along her belly, between her breasts and up her collar bone and neck. 'This is...' She heard a soft mewl in the air as his lips closed on her earlobe, sucking softly, only to realize it was hers. Her hands wove under his arms, pressing his back down, into her, his warmth and touch suddenly vital while his mouth laved at her throat.

"Mm, don't stop with those pretty little sounds, doll," he purred, his ear adjacent to her moaning mouth. Eager for more - both in quantity and volume - one hand swung low between them, eager for the cleft in her legs. 'Oh she's already soaked!' He praised, a single finger drawing through her folds, sensitive and engorged with need. "Oh darlin', I think she missed me; can't go one day without this thick cock huh?"

"F-fuck..." she keened letting her body writhe with his actions, those experienced fingers circling her bundle of nerves just the right way. Her back arched and her chest met his, her form secure under his, heat no longer an issue. "Y-you've got a talent, Coach; ever think of g-getting into porn?" She quipped, though her words evaporated into whines as his hand moved lower, two fingers sliding deep and prodding just right.

"Why, you wanna be my scene partner?" He replied; his palm mashed against her clit while his fingers worked in concert, running them along her walls in agonizing pressure. "Could call this one 'Pick Up Fuck' or some shit." She was shuddering underneath him now, chasing the high
he was giving her, but he had other plans.

"H-hey!" She exclaimed as he pulled his hand away, practically dripping. She gawked at him sucking her flavor from his fingertips, but her frustration was still there. "I was enjoying that, you fucking geezer."

"I know," he replied with a wink, finally returning to his jeans; he shimmied them off his long legs, quick work of his boxer briefs as well. She was pleased to see him as raring to go as she was, his length hard as diamond, pearled with a drop of precome on its tip. "But now you're gonna enjoy this." He rasped, taking himself in hand with a few strokes, crawling back over her.

Her legs parted to accommodate his hips, lining up with her entrance as if they'd done this dance countless times. She was still malleable from their hotel tryst, and with her freshly earned wetness he slid home with barely any give; he relished how her body jolted at the feeling of fullness, his stretch, nonetheless. "O-oh fuck..." she breathed, her hands on his ribs now as he bottomed out at the hilt, stilling and enjoying the electricity that pulsed through her, around him.

"My sentiments exactly," he chuckled, maneuvering his position slightly; he hauled the wide edge of the sleeping bag up and over his haunches, hoping to keep her warm through his ministrations. He was pressing into her in short, brief thrusts, keeping her shivering as his forearms came down around her head, his hands weaving in her hair, keeping her still and gazing into his face. "I love seeing this face when I'm inside you... can see you react to every single thing." His hips snapped with every word as he plunged into her, her nails digging at his flesh.

"W-well when you do shit like that, I'm gonna rea-ohh!" He obliterated her sentence, taking up his pounding in earnest; his hips slid back, slid out only slightly before throwing himself back in, his body flush with hers, heat and sweat beginning to accumulate. He grinned down at her lust driven face, so fervently pursuing an intimacy just out of his reach.

She kept her eyes on him, his own expression dark but adoring; the night sky behind him silhouetted him in stars and moonlight, making his teeth all the more striking as he smiled, those fingers stroking her hair. This was different for them; torrid, inexorable sex was their modus operandi, but this felt completely new. There was care in every movement, a level of devotion she was unfamiliar with. Sure, he was fucking her; but this was uncharted territory. There was no need for words between them, just soft groans and grunts as he plowed away, desperate to delve to a point he hadn't yet reached, aching to show her how he felt. For how his embrace had felt minutes earlier, keeping her grounded, now he was sending her through the night sky, drifting the cosmos locked together, those lips brushing hers sparingly, unwilling to lose her gaze for more than a moment.

In a way it was terrifying. Aside from a handful of glances she wasn't sure she'd seen, he'd never looked at her this way; but now those warm brown orbs were barreling into her soul as he did the same to her body, unknown sensations blooming with no warning. The way he fucked into her, so dominantly, but with a confidence in that he was doing just what she needed him to - whether she knew it or not - was intense, it upped the tingles, heightened her vulnerability. What normally took at least 15 minutes of serious, rough sex was being done in only a few; and she could feel it doing the same to him. That swell was unmistakable.

"N-Negan I..." she was hushed with a kiss, soft but commanding as his hips swirled against hers, his cock hitting new hotspots within her. He was rewarded with a long, breathy moan
against his lips, and the feeling of her pussy tightening around him.

"I know baby, I can feel you," he grunted, letting his hips piston a little harder, muscles flexing around her to push her past the edge. "Come for me Delle, you show me what I do to you, sweetheart."

As had become the norm, his voice and demand were the final rush she needed to find release; she became a drenched vice around his length, hands grasping for him as she let a near scream of passion free from her throat, seeing literal and proverbial stars. "Yes, Negan!"

He wasn't far behind her. His head tucking into her shoulder as he came apart, filling her with all he had, whispering deep praises against her skin while a few mismatched thrusts pumped the last of his release as deep inside her as he could reach. "Delle...!"

While she was struck by the overwhelming sensations around her - the unforgettable, unusual sex, his body encompassing hers, his breath on her skin, the brilliance of the stars above them - all he heard was the painfully opportune song that droned from the airwaves in the cab. How incredibly appropriate for him. For her.

-I know all the rules and then I know how to break 'em
And I always know the name of the game

But I don't know how to leave you
And I'll never let you fall

And I don't know how you do it
Making love out of nothing at all-

'You are royally fucked now, you dog.'

Chapter End Notes

Hope you guys don't mind the extra extra long chapter or the inclusion of music here; I tend to use songs as a mood point when I write.

Please leave a comment if ya'll are still enjoying this :) I know it's getting long, and we may be here awhile, but I appreciate all y'all who come by♡♡♡♡
"It's not a bad idea!"

They'd been arguing about a fifth wife for hours; she couldn't understand what had Negan being so unwilling. He had four already, what was one more? She'd already climbed from the tub, he'd changed into a dry shirt while she was tugging a large bathtowel around herself; there wasn't much need for modesty after their little activity. Now they were marching around his room in a proverbial cat and mouse game, each side trying to win.

"I decide who becomes a fuckin' wife, you little shit! If I ran around marrying whichever new little broad walked in everybody would want a piece of me." He groaned as he sank into his sofa, leaving Delle pacing over to him.

"Who said it can't be your idea!?" She threw her hands up as she sat down, giving him a pleading pout. "Nobody has to know I suggested it! And she's cute, who's going to question it?"

'I can think of one mustached asshole.' Was his first thought; if Simon was gunning for Delle, what else of his did he want? "Why do you want me wifing this one?" He asked, eyes narrowing under furrowed brows.

She sucked in her bottom lip, settling that truth would be safer in this situation. "She's sick," Delle admitted, adjusting her towel a bit. "She's diabetic, and her family is running themselves into the ground trying to keep up with the points for insulin."

"So you want me to take a sickly, possibly dying girl for a wife?" He snorted and rolled his eyes. "Yeah that gets me hard as steel."

"It's not like you'd have to fuck her--" His brow raised in scepticism:" just keep her alive. Simon told me your wives don't work within the points system."

'Fucking Simon!' Negan cursed the man in his mind, grumbling away. He could almost see that smug grin in his head, wishing he could tear it off his face. "Why would I want her? I can think of..." he let his eyes fall back to her, appraising the curves under the terrycloth. "...better options."

She awarded him a blank, unamused stare; she wasn't about to play the role of 'the other woman' again, not a chance. Aside from being a walking sex doll, the wives never left the Sanctuary; it was a rare sight to even see them on the trading floor, much less outdoors. "You can't seriously be asking me to be this woman again, Negan," she hissed, arms crossing over her breasts; much to his chagrin. "You and I both know I'm loads more valuable on a run than I am in bed."

"I beg to differ doll face," he chuckled, leaning in a little closer, arm against the back of the couch. "I mean, what with your injuries, maybe you could use a little extra TLC..." her hand clapped over his mouth as he pressed in to kiss her.

"What made you pick the wives you have now?" It was a question he'd never been asked, noone had ever chanced it. Drawing back his brow furrowed again, measuring her with a look.
"Figured I'm building the world from the ground up; why not have a few extra wives to fuck?" He grunted, pulling his eyes away from hers. "Since I'm the one making the rules."

She didn't buy it; maybe that was the answer he fed to his Saviors, his denizens, but it wasn't about to work on her. "Maybe that's what the big bad Negan took them for, maybe that's what he tells people," she shrugged, holding her stare. "But like you were so quick to point out earlier, I fucking know you. You've got your rules; but you've been known to bend them. Straight up break them."

He stood with a huff, wandering to his cabinet which kept the best booze his men could find; the little hellion was crafty, knew what to say. "They're my rules, I can make changes if I damn well please. What's your point?"

She listened to the trickle of liquid into glass for a moment. "My point is you could've just thrown them out to the dead; but you didn't," she crossed the room to join him, eye contact was always vital in conversations with Negan. "It might be degrading as shit, but they're safe. They're healthy. Don't you remember what you told me?" She tilted her head as she came into his view, a crooked little smile on her lips.

"Enlighten me." He muttered into his drink.

"You give a fuck about who you fuck," she reminded him, their eyes finally reconnecting; and across space and time they were sent hurtling back to a warm fall evening, a kiss under the bleachers. So long before everything had gone to hell. "Are you telling me that's not still true?"

He sighed, his shoulders dropping as he reached for another glass, selecting a high end gin from a shelf. "Surprised you're fine with me fucking them now."

"Can't get something for nothing," she explained; it was the only way she'd found to reason what he did, why they had agreed to be at his side. She knew as well as anyone the world didn't function on charity; especially the one they lived in. "And I mean... speaking from experience, if you put half the effort in fucking them like you did me, they should at least be... satisfied."

He bit his lip and stifled a growl while his cock twitched in his jeans. 'At least she admits to that,' He gave a slight nod, a little boost to his over inflated ego. "You're spot on there, sweetheart."

"Thought so," she smiled and took a sip of her gin, smooth and firey. "I mean have you seen the girl? She's adorable. And you'd be saving her life!"

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A hand moved to his face, massaging his temple where a headache was beginning to form. Delle could be as persistent as a spoiled child sometimes; and this was definitely one such time. "You do realize, once we're hitched, I can do whatever the fuck I want with her?"

A chill fell over her body but she shook it off. "...yes I realize that."

"Can spend days just goddamn pounding her."

"Yeah you could."

"She won't be walking straight for weeks."
"If that's what you want."

"Get her pregnant."

Her face changed in confusion, shock. That cold chill had wormed back in. "What?"

He nodded and retreated to his desk, leaning on its edge. "I mean, we've got to start repopulating sometime," that sly grin played on his lips, split by his tongue. "Why not start with the cream of the crop?" He thumbed a finger in his own direction with a wink.

She supposed she shouldn't have been surprised; but she couldn't help or hide it. The thought of procreation, spawning in a world such as theirs seemed nonsensical; but if there was anywhere to do it, it was Sanctuary. The place was a stronghold, and as ruler of his domain he had a right to do as he pleased. She gave a quick shake of her head, while mentally strangling the biological imperative in her sobbing 'Why not me!?'

"It's your house, Negan. If you want a gaggle of little snot nosed ankle biters running around, breaking everything in sight, you do you." She declared dismissively, swirling her quickly emptying glass.

He was a little hurt; before Delle had materialized back into his life, he'd been fervently attempting childbirth with all his wives. A man like him deserved a legacy. But as soon as those beguiling, spirited eyes had blinked up at him again, he'd found himself unable to get off without at least the thought of her. For the time it had worked well enough, but the prospect of a new wife turned his stomach. The fact that she didn't seem to care was worse. The pain she inflicted soothed as he felt her hand on his, those big bright eyes asking for something else.

"Please, Negan," she murmured, his face softening a little to her begging. "Would you do this for me? You can tell all your boys the fresh pussy excuse; nobody but me and you will know you're a good person."

He scoffed into a laugh, though he was growing pliable. "Sweetheart, we've never been good people." his palm found its way to her shoulder, tracing down the unmarked flesh.

"Then pretend," she requested, catching his fingertips in hers to set his hand back to his side; he frowned in annoyance. "Please? I know I'm a spoiled little bitch around here, but she doesn't deserve to die. She has a brother in law, Dwight, I bet he'd make a good Savior too."

"Oh you're picking out new Saviors now?" He thundered, drawing up to his full height and towering over her, their fronts grazing lightly. "Goddamn, why don't I just hand over Lucille now and start callin' all these fuckers Delle?" She balked a moment, letting a foot step back; Negan had something of a blast radius when he got mad and she was well within its zone. "Since you're so fucking eager to run shit around here; why don't you fucking marry the girl?"

"I'm not trying to take anything from you, Negan," she tried to sound soothing; but it came off as irritated. "I'm trying to help these people; I... I can't do much in this hell hole of a planet but I can try to do that, can't I?" She was the angry one now, passionate tears stinging her eyes. "I want to make a fucking difference here!" She pushed her hand against his chest in an effort to shove him, but he caught her wrist in his paw before she could pull back; the tears had started to flow, his second hand tipping her chin toward him.

He hated to see her cry; her eyes would go bloodshot quickly, making her irises all the more striking,
all the more accusing. ‘Nobody makes her cry like you do, asshole.’ His conscience scolded him with every defiant sniffle she emitted. With a long, deep sigh his arms enveloped her body, leaning his cheek into her dark hair; she stilled for a moment, uncertain of his endgame, but succumbed quickly as she held him close.

"I know you're not tryin' to overthrow me, doll," he mumbled, breathing in her scent, basking in her warmth. "You got that bleeding heart out on show, makin' me feel like a monster -- shit, don't cry now," he hushed her as she gasped again, a hand against her face to cease her tears. "I just..." 'I don't want another wife if it can't be you,' his mind chanted, urging him to say it. 'Tell her, goddamn it!' "I gotta think it over, alright? Give me a night to sleep on it."

That's when she knew she had him; he wasn't ready to surrender, not yet, but she could see the white flags being readied inside him. She hoped that Tina would be amicable to marrying him, despite his roughness, everything the lower classes said about him. Sure, a large chunk of it was true, but so was the Negan who was about to use his power to save a girl's life. She hoped that would be the one Tina would think of him as. 'She'll be thinking of him as the father of her child, soon enough.' Her demons were mocking with that information, but she pushed it as far back in her mind as she could, finding a scrap of solace that her friend might be okay.

"Now what say I redress those arrow holes of yours?" He smiled, letting his arms drop as her eyes found his again.

"Sure," she said confidently, moving her hands to affirm the hold on her towel. "But maybe I could get redressed in clothes first."

"Oh you spoil sport."

Chapter End Notes

This one went through a couple of rewrites; Delle is lucky he's such a teddy bear for her. Something big will have to happen to fuck that all up!

Please leave a comment if you like my work, I know this isn't very long but I hope it gives a little more insight to their relationship. Thanks for reading! ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 38

Chapter Notes

Oh hi Simon...

Got a long one here guys; bit of a read!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The creak of old springs and heave of a musty mattress had never felt more welcoming; Delle was finally back in her own room. It had taken some talking to convince Negan to allow her space, but she was nonetheless grateful when he relented; and ecstatic when she'd looked under her mattress. Fang had been stored exactly where she usually kept him; it didn't shock her that Negan knew about her hiding place, if anything she was touched he'd used it himself. As soon as her fingers touched the cool, blood worn metal, she felt a thousand times better than she had in days. Sheathed and held close to her chest, she fell into a sleep so deep and peaceful she could've passed for dead; her dreams taking her to a time when Fang was flesh and bone, laughing and safe. Few and far between, those dreams were her sweetest.

To kill time as she healed, Delle had taken up the task of aiding with inventory from resource runs. One arm being less than useless while it mended, she would meticulously note what came in from each colony, who was on time, who was short; excited to see that the outpost Simon ruled over was due for a shipment within a few days. It had been ages, and she wasn't sure if he'd heard what had happened; or how much she wanted to tell him. There was a storm brewing between Simon and Negan, and the last thing the bean pole needed in his head was the image of Delle coming around Negan's fingers. They hadn't defined their relationship in any certain terms, but she doubted he'd be thrilled over that.

'Why'd you let him do it, then?'' The question had been swimming in her mind for a week, ever since the afterglow had faded. She could've dug her nails into his arm til he bled, sank her teeth into his neck and taken out a hefty bite; all the things she would've done to anyone else who'd dared attack her so. 'But he's not just anyone else,' she admitted, readying for her day in the storage facility 'He's Negan'. The complexity of emotions she associated with the bat wielding megalomaniac was overwhelming; and she couldn't contest the fact of how good he'd made her feel, scratching an itch that had been building for years with a mere swivel of his fingers. 'The old geezer's still got it'. With a heavy shudder and a tug on her bootstrings, she was out her door and off to her job.

"G'morning Laura," Delle yawned as she pulled a clipboard from a wall by the facility's entry, flipping through dog-eared pages for a blank sheet. Laura, one of the few female Saviors, had arrived in the small hours of the morning, a scouting mission having proved less than fruitful. She'd spent her time camped in the inventory shelves, counting what little stock she had brought in. "How you been keepin'?"

Laura, kind if a little hyper focused, gave her a wiggling brow and a knowing smile. "Run was a bit of a bust, intel was shit. Starting to think someone's stalking us or something," she leaned up from her task and made her way Delle. "Don't have to ask how you are, though."
Delle pulled her head back with a snap, expression confused. "The fuck are you talking about?"

Laura gave her healthy shoulder a nudge. "Everyone heard about you spending a week with the head honcho. You gotta tell me, is it as big as he says?"

'It is; but that's not the point!' She thought to herself. "He made me stay up there after I got shot. I was on painkillers and stitched up like a rag doll the whole time, what the hell do ya'll think we got up to?"

Laura gave a shrug, unconvinced. "I mean; people see how he looks at you. He wouldn't even entertain a word from anyone that whole week; figured he had you pretty preoccupied." She snickered at her own wording.

'Wait, how does he look at me?' Delle couldn't blame Laura for her reaction; she'd likely tease mercilessly as well if she were in the same situation. No; her anger was with Negan. He'd no doubt heard to stories already, and hadn't bothered to set straight (well, half straight) the rumors. Being just another Savior meant the population wouldn't likely believe her, they'd need to hear it from his lips.

"Nothing happened; the man just wanted to keep an eye on me, make sure I didn't somehow get shot again," she rolled her eyes for dramatic effect. "The guy's worse than a nurse maid, fuck." She scowled and found a pen, setting to work on counting out new supplies and dividing out what was for the Saviors and for the general populace.

Laura crossed her arms but relented her position; Delle was brash and honest, and from what she'd learned of the young spitfire, would've been glad to regale her with whatever weird shit Negan was no doubt into. "Well can't say I'm not a little disappointed, Delle," she scolded mockingly. "Maybe next time!"

"Not bloody likely!" Delle replied in a false bubbly tone, marvelling at the sheer amount of bar soaps the Sanctuary had amassed; at least everyone was clean. She ran her tongue over her lip as she worked, uneasy to ask the question that had worried her since she'd walked in. "So uh... what did you mean, everyone knows?"

"I think she means everyone." The one voice she hoped never to hear so cold, so betrayed, filled her ears as she spun; accusatory chocolate eyes staring down. Simon had come home.

"Simon," for all the worry she felt that he now only saw her as some slut, she was relieved to see him; he'd clearly been working hard, outside, coloring his skin a warmer tan tone that did him every favor possible. "Fuck, feels like it's been years."

"Just a month, Twisted," her nickname; maybe she hadn't lost him after all, as he pressed past with a crate of artillery. "Hear you've been busy."

'Uh oh,' she bit her lip and turned to Laura with a begging eye, silently pleading for her to leave them be. Seemingly psychic, the Savior gave a nod and left quick stepped, likely as eager to sleep as she would be to hear the details of their encounter. Delle made quick work of the lock at the door; there would be hell to pay if anyone dared interrupt them.

"I missed you, bean pole," she moved through the rows of shelves, finding him near the back, shoving his newly found ammo into an available space; thankfully it was a spot right against a wall. She had him cornered. "Been boring as fuck here without you."
"What, is Negan not proving good company?" He crossed his arms, his face still angry and sour. "Guess he's not as great a fuck as he keeps saying." His words were shockingly cold; and she met them with insult.

"For fuck's sake, Simon," her hands went go her hips, hiding the wince she felt as her arm smarted; those wounds weren't done yet. "Do you honestly think I'm just fucking whatever's convenient when you're not here? What the hell do you take me for?"

He wanted to believe her; he really did. But after those threats Negan had made in no uncertain terms that night, there was clearly something between them that neither was sharing. "I know you're not some whore--"

"You're fucking right I'm not!"

"--you're not. But a week?" His brows upturned, arms thrown in disbelief. "What the hell else would you have been up to?"

'Shit, I don't think he knows.' She grabbed at the collar of her sweater, dragging it down and pulling - with some degree of pain - her arm free, exposing her bare and stitched wounds. His eyes went wide; her guess was right. "I don't know what he was doing, but I was healing. I saved his life from some Kingdom idiot."

He took a step forward, studying her injuries; they were fairly fresh, scarring beginning to form at the edges, while further spots held angry red scabbing. "Fuck... no one told me you were hurt." He reached out and traced her bare skin, his eyes worried as she slid herself back into the garment.

"I asked him to," she added, which was true. "I don't know why he didn't mention it... I wanted you here, Simon. I meant what I said, I really missed you." Her healthy side reached out and her fingertips slid around the back of his neck, a smile so small on her lips it barely felt there.

His hands curved in on her waist, as eager to touch her as he was to buy her story; still he kept a sharp eye on her face, watching for any doubt. "Nothing happened?" He asked, wondering if he'd see any falter in her demeanor from his question.

'Your rival and boss finger fucked me into oblivion but aside from that...' her devils were entertained, at least. "Nothing happened. He was just being bossy. You know what he's like." She let her feet arch on her toes, pressing a feathery kiss into the corner of his mouth; a month had removed his memory of how her lips felt.

"I do," he murmured, his thumbs massaging circles into her waist, his earlier trepidations moved aside so he could relish her presence again. "He's a persistent motherfucker."

"Too bad I'm not interested," 'Liar,' her conscience spat; she shooed away the thought. "I want you, Simon." Her lips were flush on his again, reminding herself of how good that mouth could feel as their tongues met, swirling together in a long awaited reunion. Strong, lengthy arms wrapped around her, pulling her tight as she stepped forward, little by little, until she felt his back hit the wall. Her hands held his cheeks, savoring the movements of her jaw under her fingertips, the reverberation of a growl against her wrists.

"Sweet Jesus, forgot how good you are at that." He grinned, panting for air.

"I'm good at lots of things, bean pole." She purred, a devilish smirk on her lips as she squirmed from
his hand, slipping down to her knees. His eyes widened as he watched her, stare still intent on him, her hands beginning to unbuckle his belt.

"Whoa, Delle hold on, you don't have to do tha--fuck!" He bucked forward as her palm coaxed him through his dark denim, her fingers doing away with his button fly and zipper. She ran her tongue across her teeth as she reached into the confines of his boxers, more than ecstatic with what she found. That bulge she'd seen months before had been more than accurate; even at half mast he was impressive and droolworthy.

She watched his face as her hand closed around the base, the blade of her hand grazing his pubic hair as she stroked him to his full glory. "I've been wanting your dick in my mouth for a month, Si," with a few extra pumps she felt him hard as steel, standing at attention. "Let me show you how much I want you."

Her lips collapsed around the head of his cock and he hitched forward; long digits weaving into her hair as she slid his generous length down her throat. She moaned around his flavor when her nose brushed his pelvis, gagging slightly but determined to keep herself full of him. She slid back slow, his dick now coated and moist; making it that much smoother when she bobbed her head again, picking up speed and intensity.

"Oh damn, Miss twisted," he shivered as her tongue laved against his manhood, her head rocking back and forth with precision. "Fuck you should miss me more often-!"

She offered a muffled moan in answer, refusing to let up on her efforts. He had that unmistakable tang of skin and sweat, though there was something to his taste that was uniquely Simon. He seemed to grow stiffer with each stroke, every lick; it was thrilling to receive such a reaction. She slid to his tip to allow his head some much needed attention, slurping up every drop of precome that pearled out; her hand kept up a rigorous jerk along his length, those grunts and snarls music in her ears.

"What a sight," he chuckled, combing her hair back from her face, the image of her wide eyes gazing back up, his sex soaked in her talents, lips playing at a wicked smile. "You are downright gorgeous, twisted."

"Aren't you a charmer?" She replied before slipping him into her waiting mouth again, earning another moaning curse. She could feel his arms starting to work, slowly beginning to guide her actions back and forth. 'Oh he wants to play like that, does he?' She let her hand move from his length, placing both now on his hips and staring up at him, the slightest nod giving him the okay. 'Show me what you got, big boy.'

Oh he had plenty to show; with her leeway he wound his fists into her mane, jerking her down so fast and hard her lips were smacked against his hilt, throat contracting across his length. 'Oh fuck!' Were the only words in his head as he started thrusting forward, bringing her head and mouth to meet him with forceful tugs; she couldn't recall ever having been throat fucked so relentlessly. Her eyes growing wet with tears she glanced up at him; that warm chocolate of his eyes almost completely eclipsed by the dilation of his pupils. He looked like a man possessed as his teeth grit behind his lips, his hands tightening in her hair; somehow he'd found a new experience for Delle, and she found herself liking it.

"That's perfect, you little psycho, fucking take it," his words tumbled from his lips in harsh pants, his cock swelling but his ruthless action never faltered. Her lips were growing red and puffy with use now; saliva coating her mouth and chin as it mingled with tears now streaming down her cheeks. She made no motion to stop him, in fact she reached around and squeezed a cheek of his backside, a
heady whimper vibrating around his length; if Negan was rough, Simon was barbaric. "Mm fuck you look so good, sweetcheeks..."

'Harder!' Her demons pleaded; Simon's utter control had awakened something in her, something they reveled in. She barely noticed herself gagging, choking on his length as he seemed to start to unravel, brows up turning and his mouth dropping open. 'Gimme!' He held her flush against his groin as he finally fell over the edge, hips spasming while he cried out her name, thick strands of come filling her mouth and dripping down her throat. Sore, raw and used, he didn't free her until every last twitch had ceased, loosing the knots he'd tangled into her hair, barely keeping himself up on the wall. She slumped down onto her thighs, tingling arms hardly keeping her upright as she gasped for air, sputtering and coughing through his bitter taste.

"Jesus fuck," he muttered, running a hand across his now sweat coated hair. The haze of passion dissipated, allowing him to comprehend the woman sat before him, her lips swollen and face wet with a mixture of fluids. "Oh shit -- I'm sorry Delle, I got kind of carried away there," he apologized, tucking his softened length back into his pants and crouching down, a hand on her thigh. "Didn't mean to be such an eager beaver; won't happen again--"

"--I'll punch you in the fucking throat if that doesn't happen again!" She exclaimed, letting herself fall forward into his arms. She kissed him with a playful fury; he didn't even seem to mind the taste of himself on her tongue. "That was hot as hell, Simon."

He beamed; he'd struck gold with this one. A lady with a bark who could handle his bite. "Yes ma'am." He muttered as his lips pressed to hers again, hoping she might be open to him returning the favor; though when she sprang to her feet, he assumed today wouldn't be his chance.

"As much as I could go another round or two, I've got a fuck ton of inventory to deal with, Si," she pulled her sleeve across her face, wiping up what remnants of their activities she could. "You'll have to wait to get this pussy."

As she moved to retrieve her clipboard from a nearby ledge he tugged her back, stood now, holding her against his chest. With one hand he gripped her arm as the other snaked between her legs, cupping her mound and feeling the distinctive heat and moisture within. "Don't think I can wait another month, Twisted," his voice crackled in her ear like thunder. "Not after that preview."

She hummed in approval, grinding against his hand before slipping away again. "Doubt you'll have to," she smiled. "What with the wedding coming up."

He quirked his head. "Wedding? You and I gettin' hitched, Delle?" He chuckled as he slid the strap of leather through his belt buckle, restoring his appearance; her mildly bruised lips would be harder to hide.

"Oh you haven't heard?" She couldn't help a little joy in her tone; her plan had worked. "Negan's found himself a new wife."

"No shit?" He laughed with a toss of his head. "Oh boy; two things to look forward to. His 'Stags' are a real riot."

'Never thought I'd be in attendance for one,' she admitted inwardly. 'But there's plenty I never thought could happen'. "Should be fun; go rest. You deserve your own bed, Si." She swatted at his backside while he passed; he offered a chomp of his perfect teeth in response.
"I don't know how I'll get a wink after that!" He called, unlocking the door and heading off to his room for well deserved downtime. She grasped her inventory list tightly, a shiver shooting through her now that she was alone. She hadn't expected having such an intense reaction to him, but as the pooling excitement in her panties could attest, she most definitely had.

'He and Negan should compare notes,' then came her pesky morals again, eager to reprimand. 'See who's dick you suck harder'.

"Goddamn it." She grumbled, taking up her task in earnest. 'Fuck Negan. I'm done with his bullshit; I want Simon.' She told herself.

'Yeah, but you need Negan.'

Chapter End Notes

I really wanted to write Simon as an aggressive lover to kind of balance how soft I've been writing him lately. Does it work?

Please drop me a line if you like what I do :) your comments keep me going! ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 39

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Before...

They didn't talk about that night in the truck; the sensitivity, gentle touches and eye contact went undisclosed as he drove her back to the crossroads he'd found her at; she'd kissed him, his heart leaping in his chest when she promised she'd see him again soon.

'You've got it bad, you old bastard,' his conscience practically materialized in the seat next to him, scolding and harping. 'You're letting this girl think she's got a shot with you; that's never gonna happen.'

He hated that above all else, it was true. If anyone were to find out about their illicit goings on, he could lose everything; his job, his credibility, his life. He didn't list Lucille in the same category anymore, but he still shivered in dread to think of her learning the truth. He could picture the look on her face, how it would kill her to know the man she loved wasn't hers anymore; because he wasn't. He hadn't gone looking for Delle as a means to hurt his wife, it hadn't been some vengeful action, but it had happened nonetheless. 'Over and over again...' his better angels grumbled.

He found himself driving most of the night; he'd pay for it the next morning, exhausted and looking like death, but he knew he wouldn't be able to turn his brain off. Whenever he closed his eyes he'd see hers, dazed in lust, steeped in starlight, that beautiful dark hair fanning out under his hands. He knew what he'd done, even if she didn't; the kind of attentive, sensual love making usually reserved for marriage was what he'd given her, and he knew he'd felt a change. 'Maybe she did too.'

"Coach?"

Two weeks had passed, and Negan was struggling to stay focused on the season. While the tie had invigorated the boys into a newfound determination, he had been so preoccupied with the other events of that weekend that he was barely coming up with new plays. Even now, as the younger Cornish stood in front of him, a concerned look on his face, Negan was caught up in thoughts of the boy's sister.

"What's up, Fang?" He asked absentmindedly, fussing with his well worn, stapled list of plays and forms.

"We're just wondering if there's any changes needing to be made?" He gestured to the field, the arrangement of his teammates.

"Oh right, uh... you know what take Sanderson and move him to short stop, then Adams can move out to left." He gave a quick nod, hoping that would satisfy the boy.

It didn't. "You sure, Coach? Adams is on the small side, I don't know how helpful he'll be out there--"

"He needs to practice if he's gonna be worth it out there. Let him work on it," he smacked a hand against Eric's shoulder. "Startin' to sound like your sister, there, kid."
He expected a laugh, but all he got were untrusting eyes and a smile before the kid rejoined the field. 
'Shit,' Negan dreaded. 'He's not convinced. At least not on my end.'

Delle was throwing herself back into her work. The time she'd taken off to join the team's away game had taken a large chunk from her weekly earnings; particularly the tips she would've earned at the bar. She was picking up unwanted shifts and staying for overtime as much as she could, trying to ensure all the household needs would be met that month; winter was coming up fast, and though folks could be generous during the holidays, it'd be a cold, quiet few months after that.

"You know you'd make more on a street corner than at both of those dives." It was a rare morning her father was home and awake; though from the bags under his eyes she doubted he'd slept yet.

"Fuck off, pops," she grumbled, cinching the built in belt of her uniform; her hair was back in as neat a bun she could manage, though she'd need to net it once she clocked in. "That's all fine and dandy for some, but I'm not about to go hocking myself like a prize heifer."

He snorted a scoffing laugh. "Prize heifer? More like ground chuck." She sighed, pushing his latest insult from her mind. She'd spent a large part of her childhood asking why he hated her so; she eventually came to the conclusion it was how she looked, almost a perfect twin to her mother. Adelaide had never been a good man, but when his wife died, he became something altogether worse. 'I guess that's what losing a loved one does to people.' It was her best estimation over years of sharp words, groundings, the odd smack. At least he didn't take it out on Eric.

"Maybe I'll start listening to your crap when you start pulling in cash." She said dismissively, lacing up her work boots; it would be a short shift, but the money was vital. Dad wasn't bringing in shit. The man hadn't provided for his children since Delle had been old enough to lie on job applications.

"My name's on the lease, you ingrate; you keep that in mind unless you want to spend winter under an overpass." He'd kicked her out before; though had come to fetch her as soon as rent was due. She wouldn't have come back if it hadn't been for Eric; if she could she would've run off with him, far and away from that soul sucking town. But it just wasn't a possibility, not now.

"Sure thing, daddy-o. Don't burn the house down while I'm gone." Were her last words as she slammed their front door, pulling out her cell phone; she hoped to find Negan free for the evening.

Salder's was depressing, for being a candy factory. The fumes from the boiling sugar and glucose was overwhelming in person; even the packaging department wore masks and goggles to avoid the sickeningly sweet odor. That was Delle's department; every shift she would pack forty small bags of the hard, citrus flavored candies into boxes, get them ready for shipping, tape them off and send them on to their next destination. It couldn't have been more monotonous, but at least it paid the bills; she could suffer almost any work if it kept her afloat.

What she couldn't suffer so easily was the foreman.

Jordan Pullman had been a senior when she was a freshman, and his father had been the packaging
supervisor until he passed the torch to his son. He was the type of man who expected everything handed to him; and it irritated him to no end that Delle wanted nothing to do with him.

She had a cardboard box hoisted in her grip as she passed him across the floor; and he all but sealed his fate as he wolf-whistled.

"You got somethin' on your mind, Jordy?" She muttered over her shoulder, ceasing her pace.

"Just checking out the goods," he chortled at his own humorless gag. "You know your ass is the sweetest thing in this factory." She had to hold back the physical urge to vomit and smack him simultaneously; she needed the work.

"Last I checked bosses can't hit on their employees." She settled on, seething.

"You want to make waves? Go ahead," he shrugged, a smug look on his features. "Pretty sure they'd quicker lose some assembly line minimum wage slave than a foreman."

'Could just push him into a vat of sugar,' her devils offered; for once she agreed with them. 'Nobody would ever know'. "Can I get back to work now?" She growled through near cracking teeth, her fingers beginning to strain around the edges of the box; she hadn't exercised in ages and was beginning to feel it.

"Gimme a kiss and you can be on your way." His laugh was so slimy, so cold, it slid down the back of her neck like an ooze; this time her mouth got away from her.

"Fuck you, Jordy Pullman! You entitled little bitch I could fucking sue you for harassing me--"

"Oh 'cause Delle fucking Cornish is just rolling in it, right? You got a lawyer on retainer?" More of that terrible laughter. Her blood boiled, cursing the life she'd been born into. "Y'know what, no kiss today. Think you'd rip my fucking lip off... watch your back, sweetcheeks."

He was off to his office, Delle close to ripping her box clear in half. What she wouldn't give for the world to be turned on its head. She thanked some god she didn't believe in that the rest of her shift went by without a sight of Jordan; had he reappeared she was certain she would've torn him apart. She was reeking of sugar by the time she punched out for the day, the sun low overhead and her body sore.

'Not done yet, Delle,' she sighed, digging through her backpack for her bus fare. They didn't come often in her little burg, but the Salder's route always ran on time. 'Off to Barnes'. 'Thankful for a Tuesday, she could guess the bar wouldn't be all that lively; if she was lucky, her father might not even show up. Sometimes he didn't, finding an old friend who didn't hate him yet to share their booze; she loved those nights.

She stretched out and massaged aching muscles while she killed time, a knot in her back she couldn't quite reach. That's how life felt, a good chunk of the time; something always just outside her grasp, something she could almost touch. Her circumstances held her stagnant in her surroundings, and though she loved Eric with all her heart, she hated the town even more. It was skillful in bringing her heartache and misery, always on the outs with whoever she crossed, that personality of hers almost instantly despised. 'Not with Negan,' Her mind was quick to add. 'He can't get enough of it'. Yet another reason she couldn't stand the town; the world had handed her the man of her dreams on a silver platter, only to snap shut on her fingers. 'He's not mine.' This was the mantra she'd adopted when 'just let it be sex' hadn't worked out as planned. That night under the stars, she'd felt something
between them; a heated electricity, different from their usual sexual relationship. It had been warmer, more contented; like a deep sleep in safe arms. She dared not give it the name her devils had already been screaming; instead, she simply told herself over and over that he wasn't hers. She could never expect him to drop everything, whisk her away to some far away part of the country, carve out happiness by themselves; but her dreams of late had been exactly that. She checked her phone, toying with the idea of a text; but with the day she'd had she didn't want to look at him.

'He's not mine,' she chanted as the bus pulled up. 'He never will be.'

Chapter End Notes

Hope you guys don't mind these two bitching and complaining for a chapter ;)

Thanks for reading! Leave a comment if you like what I write, keeps me writing and faster!♡♡♡♡
Chapter 40

Chapter Notes

Negan makes good on a promise...

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Delle didn't see Tina in the week leading up to her 'marriage' - she guessed she was getting acquainted with the other wives, hoping she wasn't being fed stories of what a monster Negan was. 'But he is, though,' her moral compass divined. 'Don't let his smile fool you. The devil is beautiful; and he swings a baseball bat'.

With her stitches removed and wounds almost completely healed, Negan was resistant to allow her to come to his customary 'Stag'. It was tradition that his Saviors get royally trashed the night before he initiated a new wife, but he couldn't help but feel her presence would put a damper on the evening; something about his old, feisty flame slinking around his second lieutenant all night rubbed him the wrong way.

"Negan, you seem to be forgetting what you had me promise you when I got here." She'd pointed out, following him down to the yard like a belligerent child. He swung himself around on his heel, Lucille perched on his shoulder like a watchful crow. 'How long has it been since I've seen him with her?'

"Fuckin' remind me, doll face," he muttered, face full of anything but patience. He tapped his boot against the ground expectantly; he had to go and deal with Gavin and Jared, the pair just arriving back from the Kingdom. "Snappy, if you can."

She stepped in close, taking a quick inventory of those around; to her naked eye things appeared safe, but it was near impossible to be sure. "You don't want people knowing we know each other." She hissed, hands moving between the two.

He stiffened immediately, his casual stance taken over by his tyrannical character instantly. "Who the fuck did you tell?" He whispered furiously. "I swear to fuck Delle if you ran your fuckin' mou--"

"I didn't tell anyone! But you keep dropping hints," her eyes scanned their location again; still deserted. "Why the fuck would the big bad wolf spend a week nursing some non-wife back to health? It doesn't make any sense," he had to give her that. "Did you forget how to sneak around? Surely you got better than when I last saw you."

Faced with her crossed arms and pouty lips, Negan relented. "Fine," He declared with a roll of his eyes. "Now c'mon. Got you somethin'," he watched her exasperated expression. "Get the lead out, you little shit; after this I'll treat you like any old run of the mill Savior. Pinky fuckin' promise."

She let her body relax as she followed him to the entry bay, recognizing Gavin and Jared - someone she still wasn't completely settled with - climbing from a pick up truck. What stopped her in her tracks were the two men in the back; hog tied and bound similarly to how she herself had arrived. They were a little roughed up, one sporting a black eye and the other what looked like a broken
"Nice work, men!" Negan's act was in full swing, Lucille dancing in his grip as he strode to meet them, Delle in tow. "Those renaissance fucks give you any grief for them?"

"Just some tears," Gavin replied, giving Delle a wave. "They know what they did."
Jared said nothing, just held the two men in place as they squirmed, winced.

"Well here you are, doll," Negan cast his arm towards his latest prisoners, presenting them like a gift. "These two are the geniuses who thought it was a bright idea to stick you full of arrows."

Delle saw red. Her immediate action was the lunge forward, shrieking and swinging her bare hands towards them; even Jared flinched at the sight. Negan however, stuck his free arm out and caught her by the waist, halting her firmly as she kicked and clawed.

"Easy, champ," he murmured, that dimpled smile on his cheeks; she was a vicious little fox. "If I'm gonna grant you the privilege of wastin' these two, you're gonna do it right."

"What the fuck's wrong with me tearing them apart right here?" She snarled, though her fighting had ceased.

"C'mon, kid; have a little showmanship," With that he swung his arm around her shoulder then jerked his head in the direction the the main building, his lackeys following his step dutifully. "You may have forgot this while that arm was on the mend, but we Saviors are all about sending a message."

She wasn't surprised he'd gathered the masses onto the factory floor; he often did whenever he wanted to make a point. But that wasn't the case today. He allowed his men and their captives through the doors first, hanging back a moment while the two bowmen were forced to their knees; it was a feeling Delle remembered clearly, the cold concrete stinging hers. "We remind the world who we are with every goddamn drop of blood we spill; so little Delle... tell me who you are."

It was a parroted response; but for the first time she felt his power, the strength that came with the answer. "I am Negan." She said firmly.

"Good girl," he smacked his hand against her arm. "Now show me." He took up his stride, sauntering into the crowd, steeped in his bluster while she stomped along behind him. Him in his black and her in her red, they looked like a mentor and student, and she was about to give a presentation.

"I'd like to think you all know I don't fuck around with your all's welfare," another speech, but finally one she was interested in. "And that goes double for my Saviors. My heart just fuckin' busts when I hear one of these idiots gets themselves killed on a run," he thumbed toward the gaggle of Saviors tha decorated the side wall; Simon was in attendance. "But goddamn; when I see one of my guys fuckin' shot at on my watch? That shit just bites right in the dick!" He crouched to the heads of the men from the Kingdom, each one trembling and praying silently for mercy. "You must recognize that girl there," he gestured to Delle with Lucille, though the men didn't raise their eyes. "That one you dumb fucks shot full of holes; well let me tell ya, you should've aimed to kill 'cause this little psycho has a temper!"

Her eyes glanced to Simon for a moment, swearing she saw him prickle at Negan's use of 'psycho' - it was his name for her, and hearing it off his lips was inciting the green eyed monster inside.
"Simon!" Negan's bark summoned his right hand rival forward, Delle only coming to grips with what was under his arm then; he was holding Fang. Despite her feelings for him she felt herself grow enraged, anyone else's hands on Fang were tainting and dirty; even if it was Simon. "If you wouldn't mind givin' the lady her weapon of choice." Negan drawled with that cocky grin; she was his protégé in the eyes of his people. Simon was the last thing on their minds; he hoped hers, too.

Simon extended Fang towards her, offering her the handle; the cool grip was familiar and welcoming under her fingers, heart calming in the moment. "You need a new hiding place." He breathed, their eyes meeting for a momentary spark of electricity.

"Delle," Negan stepped aside, one hand on his hip, the other bouncing Lucille excitedly. "Anything to say to these jackasses?"

She regarded them with few feelings other than cold anger; she knew why they'd jumped to attack, defend their brother in arms, but she didn't care. They shot her. She knew they'd likely been ordered by Ezekiel to watch for unrest, that they were merely pawns, but she didn't care. They shot her. She knew they probably had loved ones, families back at the Kingdom, people who would never see them alive again, but she didn't care. They shot her. She summoned up all her fury, channeling the evil that now lived in Negan, letting it control her mouth.

"Hi, boys," she smiled a saccharine-sweet smile, her eyes sparkling as Fang twisted in her hand. "My name is Delle. I'm a little curious, have either of you been shot before?"

The two men didn't react at first; but when Negan slammed Lucille against the concrete, they shook their heads rapidly.

"Well let me let you in on a little secret?" She knelt low, making sure she'd captured the gaze of both men. That beaming smile didn't drop. "It fucking sucks. It's like someone cuts a hole in you, then stabs their finger in; twisting and burning, like a mean fuck," she paused, before pulling up Fang; with his curved, pointed back edge she cut mild incisions into both men's arms, each matching on opposite shoulders. She set Fang down a moment, watching the two carefully. "But I'm not doin' it justice. After all, feeling is believing."

She gripped either arm and sank her respective thumbs into their fresh cuts, her digits pushing through like she was peeling an orange; the cries the men emitted were strangely sweet to her, only adding to her fervor and pushing deeper. "See, boys?" She asked, letting her thumbs twist inside their wounds. "Isn't that just the fucking worst?"

Tears streamed down the younger man's cheeks, while the other had bitten his lip so hard he bled. Negan watched with a sincere mix of horror and admiration; she had wound up teaching him a lesson in cruelty, punishment. With one final dig of her fingers, she withdrew, retrieving Fang and standing up at her usual height. "That's how I felt, when you shot me," she hissed, watching blood trickle from their now gaped wounds; they weren't bleeding near as much as she had. "I want you to know you brought this on yourselves; you made me do this."

The older man looked up at her, knowing he had nothing left to lose, nowhere to run. "Y-you're just as bad as he is," he choked out, blood sputtering from his lips. "You're both monsters."

"Well if he didn't just hit the nail on the head." "You're wrong," she murmured, moving to the side of the younger man. "I'm so much worse." With a heavy cast of her arm she brought Fang down, into the neck of the young man; she was old hat at killing blows, the head severing clean. His friend cried
out, watching as the headless body slumped to the floor, blood gushing from its fresh stump.

"What'd they call him?" Delle pondered aloud, looking to her captive. He stared at her with fear and disgust, his friend's blood spattering her clothes. "I asked you a question; either answer and die quickly, or I'll drag this out all damn day."

Through gritted teeth he answered. "Lewis." She nodded, shrugging as she used her booted foot to turn now dead Lewis' head; the brain intact, he'd turned, his mouth hungry for flesh it couldn't eat. She leant and swept him up by a fistful of hair, holding him outwards like a lantern.

"Maybe I should just let him bite you," she mused, offering him to his friend. "Watch you turn, nice and slow; then add you to the garden outside..." the older man twisted, trying to scramble away; only for Gavin to spring to life and hold him still. "Thanks, Gav'. You're a gem." Delle threw him an award winning smile and a quick wink.

"Delle," Negan half called, half growled for her attention. He spun his hand at the wrist, brows raised. "As fun as it would be to see this coward turn nice and slow, we've all got shit to do," he snapped his fingers. "Pick up the pace, you little shit."

For once, she listened; she nodded obediently and turned back to her second query. "And what's your name, handsome?" She tilted his head up with the flat side of Fang, his blood spilling across from his mouth.

"It's Ryan."

"You got anyone back at the Kingdom? Someone shed tears for you today?" She tried to sound as gentle as possible.

"M..my wife," his voice finally broke, thinking of the woman he'd left behind. "Sandra."

"Great," Delle grinned as she moved to his side, dropping Lewis and readying her aim again. "I'll know where to send your head."

They were the last words Ryan would ever hear; his shoulders loosed from his head just as swiftly as his friend's. Fang dripped with fresh blood, Delle breathing deep and unevenly as she took in her work. The room was silent but for a few whimpers and gasps, both heads now gnawing and chewing in the hope of human flesh. The quiet finally broke with the sound of applause; Negan brought his hands together over and over, Lucille tucked in the crook of his arm.

"Hot damn, is there anything hotter than a bloodthirsty woman!?!" He bellowed into a laugh, Simon darkening behind him. "And sendin' their heads back? You are one sick puppy."

"S'pose I should've asked first," she shrugged and rubbed a hand over her hair; blood pulled away with it. "Can we do that? Please?"

She was making good on her word; *I'll follow your rules*. He returned her question with a toothy, proud grin. "We'll see, doll." He was more than shocked when she didn't argue back.

With a few more harsh words and bows, the crowd of Sanctuary citizens dispersed; Simon made to join her but was quickly given some meaningless task with the other Saviors. Something along the lines of finding 'wedding presents' or something equally pointless. It left Negan and Delle alone; as they were when they did their best and worst work.
"That," he chuckled gruffly. "Was the sexiest thing I've seen a chick do since the world ended!" He restored Lucille to her place of honor, his eyes shining towards Delle.

"It did feel pretty good," she admitted; she swung Fang down quickly into the air, excess blood streaking the floor.

"Now what do you say?" He leaned in with a tilt of his head, a hand cupping his ear. Somehow she didn't hate the question as much as the first time.

"Thank you, Negan," she sang her response as sweetly as she could. "He did a great job today, didn't he?" She grinned and raised Fang in her hand, letting the head rest in her palm.

"Still the fuckin' champ," he chuckled back; his eyes flicked between hers and her Fang. "...may I?" He reached a hand for the blade, waiting.

'When has he ever waited?' She tried to remember but came up short. She stared up into his face, looking for his ulterior motive or unspoken intention, but saw none. With a slow, deliberate nod his fingertips met her steel, tracing the blood of her kills.

"Great job, kid," he practically whispered it, she wasn't even sure she'd heard him; but she knew he wasn't talking to her. She was nonplussed to find she didn't feel any of that earlier rage inside, surprisingly calm at the sight of another person touching her Fang. But then, this wasn't just any other person. 'Still a fuckin' ace.'

She found a crooked smile crawling across her face, in spite of herself. 'Stop it, Delle.' "Don't you have some shit to do?" She pulled her machete away, the question more an excuse to run from the moment.

"Indeed I do. Wedding planning, and all that." 'Right, he's marrying your friend on your request,' her conscience reminded her. 'He's less yours now than he ever was.' She banished the thought, giving a nod goodbye. Maybe this was the best way, the one version of the world where they could be friends and function without each other.

She'd never been so wrong in all her life.

Chapter End Notes

Extra long one again guys! What do we think? How did Delle handle herself?

Please leave a comment if you like what I write!! Your words keep my words flowing! ❤️❤️❤️❤️
It was as much as could be expected.

By the time Delle had completed inventory the Saviors' celebration was in full effect; held in what amounted to be the staff room, a handful of empty liquor bottles already littered the ground while the lieutenants crowded around the long conference table, laughing, fighting, teasing the man of the hour. If it weren't for the overwhelming stench of death wafting in from outside, it almost would've looked normal.

"Hey gorgeous," she was hanging back from the festivities, a beer in hand when Simon came up behind her, fingers catching her bare skin; it seemed like the right occasion for the cropped top and low slung cargo pants, her stomach and lower back on display. 'Who are you showing off for, Delle?' "Been waitin' for ya."

"Cut me some slack, Si, some of us still had work to do," she nudged a shoulder into him, a smile on her lips as she surveyed the party. "Looks like my absence didn't hinder anyone's fun; yours included." She could smell the faint tinge of tequila washing his breath; he'd never really seemed like the beer type.

"Can't say no to a drink with the bachelor on his special day," he giggled and leant against a wall. "Okay maybe more than one drink."

She raised a brow, arms crossing as she joined him. "I don't fuck lushes, Si; better keep your wits about you." She breathed in a hushed purr, his dark eyes dilating and lighting up.

"Is that right?" He wasn't too drunk yet. He knew better than to try and kiss her, touch her while Negan was watching; he wasn't sure how much he was aware of, but he didn't need to know more. "Guess it's my special day too."

"We'll see if you play your cards right." She kicked off the wall, letting her hips sway a bit in a kind of visual gift while ambling up to Negan.

"Congratulations, boss," she hummed when she reached his side; his eyes stuck to her midriff before being dragged to her face. "You picked a hell of a girl."

Affirming it'd been his choice to marry Tina was helping to sell the story, no matter how untrue it was. "I've got an eye for talent," he replied, lifting his glass of what was no doubt whiskey to meet her bottle. "You intendin' to be the stripper for the evening? Can practically see down your pants." 'You wish, you old bastard.'

"This was all I had that was clean," she shrugged, setting him on edge a moment as she leaned down, an arm bracing on his seat as her lips met his cheek. "That's all the entertaining I'll be doing tonight." She left as quickly as she'd come, coiling herself into a seat down the line, past the poker game he was half invested in. He had a nubile young woman to marry the next day, but all he could think of was the wet spot she'd left in his cheek.
She kept her mind sturdy, despite a few drinks under her belt; not nearly as much as the other Saviors. Regina - the only other woman who'd decided to come - was loudly telling a story of every girl she'd fucked in a bathroom stall before the end, Gavin and Wade were red faced and giggling while Jared looked ready to start a fight; there were a half dozen other Saviors who would've done the same. The remaining crew - names she'd never bothered to learn - were still half concentrating on cards as hard, classic rock shook from speakers; she guessed all of Sanctuary was condemned to listen to it. What shook her was Negan and Simon; the two were sat near side by side, carrying on like they were thick as thieves. *They probably were, before I came along*.

"You rarin' to go tomorrow, chief?" Simon managed to slur out a question; he loved tequila but it did not love him. "That Tina is one fine little slice."

"You're damn right; and every inch is fuckin' mine," he growled out with an honest grin; Tina was in fact beautiful, but with Delle around he hadn't been noticing the new tail at Sanctuary that he normally would've. Tina was the best of a bad situation. "Get your dirty thoughts thought tonight, they're gonna be goddamn illegal by morning."

Simon laughed a little louder than he'd meant to; in his altered state he was reasoning that Negan had acted so possessive toward Delle simply because she was there and he had been bored. With Tina around, the little troublemaker was fair game again; the conclusions of a drunken brain incredibly wrong. "Nothin' to worry about there, boss; I've got my own slice to think about."

Negan's extremities were tingling, though he wasn't certain if it was the excess whiskey or anger. He knew his second-in-command was talking about Delle, *his* Delle; though their company didn't permit the reaction he was wishing to act on. "The little shit, huh?" He muttered into his drink with a semblance of a snarl. "I'm still gunnin' for that one too... she could be lucky number six," he glanced to his friend. "Think you're up to snuff, Si?"

"Heart wants what it wants! And that sweet little maniac..." If Simon wasn't careful he was going to get himself killed; as he chuckled Negan pictured himself wringing his neck. "No, no... she's a freak of nature, that one. Not that I can blame her, brother and all..."

'She told HIM about Fang!?' Negan's devils roared to life, furious while his heart wrenched in his chest. "Brother?" He lied, trying to seem impartial.

"That's where the name comes from," Simon's loose lips made Negan want to tear them off. "Fang, when he died--"

"Hey boys," Delle seemed to appear on cue, smiling through nervous eyes. "You two look redder than a Santa suit."

The drinks had gone to their faces, though Negan was still focused on the discussion at hand. "Simon tells me you had a brother." The way he said it sounded more like *you just ran over my dog*.

"Once," she answered, her spine straightening. She hadn't seen this look on Negan's face in years; heartbreak. She couldn't take it; had she looked at him the same way? Rather than focus on his accusatory eyes, she turned her attentions to Simon. "Hey bean pole, you're pretty fuckered, eh?" She nearly pushed him away as he rested his head against her bare stomach; there was a dare in his eyes as he looked to his leader, testing him to do something.

"What happens in Vegas, little miss Twisted," he muttered, muffled by her flesh as he twisted in
against her. "I'll cool it, promise."

"Get 'im on his feet, Delle," Negan couldn't even look at her, turning to the Savior on his left. "He should've known better than to try n' drink me under the table." As she hauled him down the table, settling him into a new spot to rest, all he wanted was to tear him apart. He felt cheated, Simon knowing something about her that he didn't; on top of that ashamed that she hadn't felt safe enough to tell him. 'She's not yours,' his morals poked at him. 'Never was - she can talk to, fuck whoever she wants'.

'She's mine,' his own thoughts took over, jealous and greedy. 'Even if she wants someone else. She belongs with me'.

Another hour into the night, now cutting into the morning; the crew of soldiers somehow more energized than ever. Negan stewed with a grin plastered on his face, watching the makeshift fight club his minions had started at random. DJ and Fat Joseph were already sporting fat lips and black eyes, though Negan wished Simon would volunteer as a chance to beat the life out of him. But of course, the opposite raised her hand.

"Let me have a go!" Delle wormed her way into the circle of men, standing at least a head shorter than their smallest there. She saw the hesitation in their faces, but wasn't about to take no for an answer; with her drinks came a primal, relentless energy, and if she didn't force it out through fists she'd wind up fucking Simon into the table.

'Or Negan."

'Or both!'

"C'mon boys, I promise I'll go easy on you," she tried to shove away her lusting thoughts in favor of a fight; glad to see Jared fuming at the edge of the crowd. "How about you, Jared? I know you want a piece of this." She made a show of swaying her hips, hands moving up to fluff her hair.

"Right; 'cause I want to get my ass killed," he rolled his eyes but his posture spoke of a need to scrap. "I don't think your Daddy wants me scratchin' up his fuck doll."

"Daddy's fine with it!" Negan had hoisted himself from his chair, only to lean against the table for a clear view. He knew that look in Delle's eye, and rather than ditch his own Stag to fuck her - as much as he wanted to - he was in the mood for a good fight. "You gonna let a girl talk you down, Jared?"

Jared's already grouchy face darkened, his jaw setting as he stepped up to Delle. "Fine," in a hushed tone he added. "About time someone proved you aren't shit."

"Think that's you, Jare'," she laughed as she rimmed the crowd, sizing him up. "I can back up my bark, unlike some people." The Saviors crowed at this, sending her opponent barreling forward, arms ready to grab; leaving his stomach open for her booted foot. Just as quick as he'd come he was knocked back, Delle letting her knees bend and bringing her fists up to fight proper; he wasn't finished, not by a long shot.

"Fucking bitch!" He roared despite a breathless belly; he was more calculated this time, he stepped heavy and managed a grazing blow to her arm, earning a slight wince and a well aimed knock to his teeth.
"Oh that's gotta smart!" Negan was thrilled, watching his favorite wildfire burn someone else for once. She was tiny, but that didn't mean she couldn't pack a wallop in her hits. Jared's face was furious as he spat a glob of blood from his already swelling lips, staring at the young woman like he could tear her limb from limb. "You just gonna take that, boy?"

He certainly wasn't. This time as he came at her he kept his hands open; fingers digging into her hair and scratching her scalp as he yanked her into a full Nelson, hands knitting behind her head. "Not so high and mighty now, you cunt," he growled, tightening his hold. She wriggled as best she could, but with his height her feet were barely brushing the floor. "Teach you to start shit with me, learn you some manners!"

"I never learn," she hissed in gritted teeth, jerking her head forward as far as it would go before impacting it against Jared's nose; a distinctive crack filling her ears. Instinctively he let go, cradling his now gushing nose, bruising already apparent; in his distraction she took her chance, her fist coming up under his chin and knocking his teeth, finally sending him to the ground. "Stay down, bitch!"

Her comrades couldn't have been more tickled; the sight of Jared, looking like a reject from a long forgotten metal band, decked out and bleeding at the feet of a tiny firecracker of a woman. Negan was the most boisterous by far, applauding and laughing to the point of tearing up. "Now that was a fuckin' show!" He declared, raising his glass, nearly empty. "And you said you wouldn't be the entertainment tonight!"

Dell rubbed the back of her head and surveyed her knuckles; the last punch had worn some skin off and a little trickle of red dripped from her middle most. "Consider it a wedding present, boss," she winked, despite a twisting in her chest she was trying to deny. "My gift to you."

"Well aren't you a doll?" It seemed like the safest reply. The two shared a smile that in another lifetime would've been followed by passion and moans; not here, though, not now. For now, one of his men was freshening his whiskey, asking where they could get more chicks like her; it was enough to distract him, enough for Delle to slip out of the ring, Jared shuffling off in shame.

"Fuck, Delle..." when had Simon appeared? His hands hadn't touched her but his front was pressed tight against hers; those eyes of his the near black she'd seen in the stockroom days before. "That was...incredible. We need to blow this joint; I can't wait anymore."

She looked up to him, her own pupils wide and cheeks flushed; the fight had been far from satisfying, and she still had untapped stores of energy to expend. "I can't either."

Negan didn't even notice them slip from the room.

Chapter End Notes

Oh my; what will those two be getting up to all alone?

Please leave me a comment if you like what I write, they truly keep me inspired and writing fast enough to keep up with postings!
The Timberwolves were raucous with victory; whoops and hollers heard from all around as the star player, Eric 'Fang' Cornish was raised on the shoulders of his teammates, joyous and roaring. He'd clinched another win, the championship win, for his team with a swing so hard the crack of the ball sounded like a clap of thunder, zooming so far from the field there was no point in trying to hunt it down.

He was on top of the world; Delle watched quietly from the sidelines, rubbing her hands through knit gloves. She was proud of her brother but more than excited the outdoor season was done for the year. She'd never been big on the cold. It didn't stop her cheering though, hugging him when he finally broke free of his fan club.

"You did great tonight, Fang," she murmured, ruffling his hair. "They should be sending you up to the big leagues now!"

He couldn't stop smiling, overjoyed with his win. 'So this is what happy in high school looks like,' Delle mused. 'It suits him.' "Thanks sis; um, is it okay if I go out with the guys for tonight? Celebrate a little? Nothing crazy I promise--"

"--kid you deserve to get a little crazy; have fun, and you call me if you need anything." She didn't often specify calling, with her rather dismal phone plan; but she wanted to know he was safe. He nodded vigorously, those teeth never ceasing their grinning as he rejoined the team, all making their way to the locker room to change into less polyester.

"They're gonna make movies about that kid," where had he been hiding? Negan's deliberate, long strides took him to her side, keeping a respectable distance while the fans and team alike filtered from the baseball diamond. "He's a force to be reckoned with."

"He's a Cornish," she replied, unwilling to look over at the man she knew was staring at her. "We're built that way."

'You sure are.' He thought to himself, allowing his eyes to steal a glimpse at her figure, that red leather jacket nipping in at her waist, strained slightly by the multiple layers she no doubt had underneath. She and her brother shared the same fire, but his was concentrated, a carefully cultivated flame, she was a wildfire. "You're not partying with the kids tonight?" He asked.
"Fuck no," she chuckled, pulling up her collar. "Don't have much patience for drunk teenagers; even when I was one." She thought back to nights of disjointed memories, black spots amidst yelling, music, boys who didn't know what they were doing. 'Not like him.'

"I've never met a forty-five year old nineteen year old before," he smiled as she swatted his arm, brows furrowed but a smirk on her lips. "Next you'll tell me you're back's out or something."

"Think that's you, you fucking geezer." Their banter was one of her favorite things in a world she hated; even though everything about their relationship was unorthodox, this made sense. It felt natural.

The crowds had dwindled down, only a few loose figures near the road now, waiting for rides home. In a little while the grounds would be all but abandoned, excepting the sinful pair. He was already sorting out sports equipment, taking stock that the number of helmets going into storage was correct.

"How about a glass with me then?" He offered, moving to hoist up the catcher's mask and pads; she was quick to pull together any hard baseballs that had tumbled from their usual drawstring bag. "I keep some of the good stuff in my office, for nights like this. Would be nice not to drink alone."

She sized him up cautiously; the last time they'd shared a drink it had resulted in a quarrel, something she hoped not to repeat. Maybe this time it'd be safe to chance. "Why not -- besides, the thought of some old man crying into his whiskey all alone just breaks my damn heart." It earned her that deep, thick laugh she loved, even if it sent fearful chills to her core; she pushed those worries down as far as they would go as they cleaned up the field.

Down in his office, Negan removed a key from his desk to access the school letter printed trunk laid up against the far wall; producing a bottle and two old, slightly tinged plastic cups. The man was more utility than decoration. Delle slicked off her jacket and took a seat in the molded plastic chair he kept set before his desk; he'd chastised her countless times while she was under his education in the same seat. 'Still got alot to learn.' She imagined, accepting the now full cup from her... whatever-he-was.

"Cheers," he toasted with a smirk, leaning against the desk. "To awe inspiring coaching."

"Aha, right," she rolled her eyes with a scoff, raising her glass. "To one hell of a star player."

"I'll drink to that." Their cups clicked together before long sips, the liquor of choice surprisingly smooth on Delle's throat. Negan had his tastes; her and good booze being two of them.

"I haven't seen you in awhile." Negan spoke with a swirl of his cup; his eyes were hooded and drinking her in.

"Been busy; work's busting my ass lately," she admitted along with a shrug. "Haven't seem you around the bar lately either."

He conceded that; on top of wanting to be gentle around her, the bar had lost its place as a viable option. Being a pub meant exactly that; it was public, and if the wrong person saw the way he acted around her, it would mean the end of everything. And he was not about to let go of her.

"Busy," he parroted back. "And what can I say? Those limp dicked morons hittin' on you at the bar; I'm not lookin' to start a brawl." He gave her a wide smile but was only met with a nod and brow raising.
'He doesn't have much right to be so possessive,' her conscience jumped to point out. 'You're not his to keep.' "Awe, poor coach," she teased, taking a quick sip. "Defending your susceptible little student from all those big bad brutes chasing her tail?" She pulled a mocking pout, her eyes crinkling with a smile.

He drew himself up a little bit, his chest puffing out. "That tail is mine to chase."

'Oh is it?' Her demons laughed. "Right," she stood from her seat, setting her drink next to him while she placed her hands on either side of him. "So they're not even allowed to think of all the ways they want to fuck me?"

The very thought brought a darkness to his eye, glaring through his lashes. "Careful, Delle." He warned with another swig.

"What's the matter?" She blinked her lids as innocently as she could, raising her hands with a shrug. "I'm a free agent; why can't they picture railing me against the bar, playing with my tits?" She punctuated by grasping her chest, fondling for a little extra taunt.

There was a fury building in him. The idea that to the outside world, she appeared single; any dumbass could come along and try to pick her up. She couldn't even use the boyfriend excuse. "Last I checked those are mine to play with," He growled, reaching forward with his open hand and letting it take the place of hers; he could feel her nipple stiffening under his touch. "Just like this is mine," his voice dropped lower, harsher, as those fingers slid around to squeeze her backside, forcing her closer. "And you fuckin' know this is mine." His palm cupped against her cunt through her pants; finally getting a whimper out of her. But she wasn't done playing.

"That's funny," she purred, leaning up to his lips, not quite brushing. "I don't see your name on me." She pulled from his hold and sank back into her chair, crossing her legs both to tease and calm herself down.

He grumbled, setting his cup down and draping himself over her, his hands resting on the back of the plastic chair, eyes boring into hers. "You want 'property of Negan' stamped all over you, sweetheart?" Those feisty eyes shone back up under the guise of a devilish smile; she couldn't stop herself from quivering at the idea. "You want me to come fuck you across that bar? Show everybody who's good girl you are?" She didn't respond with anything but a lick of her lips."Heh; yeah you fuckin' do," he spoke with total confidence. "You want me all over you; and here I was thinkin' all you wanted was sex."

With that she leaned up, past his cheek to drag her teeth against the lobe of his ear. "Why the fuck do you think I'm here?"

Her top was the first thing to go; thankfully without its total destruction like the first time they'd met in his office. His mouth found hers as his hands gripped her lower back, hoisting her up and and wrapping her appendages around him. The kiss was a flurry of lips, tongues and teeth, as if each were searching for some new flavor in the other. He groaned first; as her back met the desk she bucked her hips up against his, the pressure on his erection deliciously torturous. Palms groped at her tits, well educated fingers teasing her rosy nipples to stiffened peaks to a chorus of mews and cries.

"Don't go tellin' me you want to trade in all this for some dickless asswad." Negan broke this kiss, lips slightly raw from intensity and slid down; a freshly excited nipple met his mouth, eagerly coated and sucked for all its worth.
"Mm; I don't know, younger men might have better stamina." She joked, but his teeth on her skin said he didn't find it funny. He mimicked his attentions at her other breast, hands preoccupied with fighting the fly of her jeans. A quick shove found him surprised and thrilled.

"No panties? You dirty little girl, you," he chuckled. He slid her legs from their denim confines, tugging off her shoes when stuck. There was something enticingly scandalous, staring down at her bare body, spread out like a feast; all for him. "You had this all planned, huh?"

In truth she had; her life had been grating since that night, almost everything was unsatisfying or downright infuriating. She needed him; at the very least to fuck the pain away. 'But he doesn't need that on his ego.' "Laundry day," she purred, reaching down to pull at his belt loops. "Caught me with my pants down."

"So I did." He didn't fuss with losing his layers, dropping to his knees as he dragged her hips to the edge of the surface. As much as he loved the repartee, he was in a soft tongued mood; she felt the same as he pulled a long, lazy lick through her folds, juices already beginning to coat his chin. The demons in him grinned and cheered as her fingers found his hair, tugging him flush with her slit; he took the cue quickly, his lips circling her little gem of nerves and sealing around it, the near screams filling his office. He almost wished someone would hear her, hear what he did to her. His wide hands spread across her stomach, keeping her from bucking too hard and cracking his teeth as those pearly whites gently bit at her inner thighs, outer lips before letting his tongue take over again, slithering into her seeping pussy with ease.

"O-oh damn, that's perfect..." she panted, one of his hands trailing down just enough to press his thumb to her clit while he thrust his tongue in and out, the flood of arousal it created coating his lips, chin and desk. Her fingers clawed at his head, keeping him from pulling away; not that he would've, his eyes trained on the reactions in her face and under his lips. He drew forceful, slow circles across her bud, focusing on her taste as she wrapped her legs around his neck. "Fuck, keep going, yes--!

He'd hit a sweet spot, much to his delight; he reveled in it, the way her muscles twitched and fingers held him tight. "Fuck, you're a goddamn faucet, babygirl," he groaned into a chuckle, his deep voice buzzing against her skin, his single digit picking up speed and pressure. "Fuckin' flooded..."

"Less talk, more lick!" She demanded, grinding herself as much as she could to his mouth, letting it fall flush with her sex and allowing his tongue to find new depths. She could just catch his eyes leering up at her, dark and wanting between her thighs, in hot pursuit of her release. This was Negan at his finest, hunting like a madman; eager, skilled and starving. "Mm, fuck -- Negan...!" That had become his favorite sound; his name on her lips as she fell apart, the intensity of her orgasm forcing his tongue out while his finger kept up its steady, wrathful rhythm amidst her whimpering. Watching her let go was so incredibly intimate; something just for him, from her, that body and face moving in ways only he could elicit. Her legs began to slack over his shoulders, still spasming slightly as she rode out the wave he'd swept in, his efforts dropping to lazy before stopping all together; the floor was starting to hurt his knees.

"Like you're gonna find better than that at Barnes' place." He snorted, standing up to relish in the puddle of a woman in front of him. Her chest was heaving for breath in long gulps, her hands reaching up past her head in a satisfied stretch; it didn't keep her from the wicked little smirk on her lips.

"Maybe I should be holding auditions," she reached up to tug him down by his collar, his wide form kneeling hurriedly over her. She wanted to think she held him tight because she was cold; when
really she just needed him close. "See how you measure up."

He chuckled and wove a hand into her hair, pressing kisses against her throat. "You're relentless," he muttered - the feel of her skin under his mouth, her warm body, the smell and taste of the climax he'd pulled from her - he felt drunk on her. And drunk and happy, he said what he shouldn't have. "I love that about you."

Her body went stiff as a board, the proximity suddenly jarring and snaring. Her arms dropped from his sides, eyes shutting to the guilty headache closing in.

"Why'd you have to go and ruin this?"

Chapter End Notes

Oh Negan you sexy idiot you.

Hope ya'll are still enjoying the exploits of Delle at the end of the world; your comments make my whole life and remind me I'm not just writing out the silence. ♡♡♡

I'm officially saying I'm taking a few days off this week to write, too; feel free to throw a bookmark on this to find out when I next post, but it won't be long.
Chapter 43

Chapter Notes

Oh here we go...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

She wasn't sure how they'd managed to get to his room without tearing each other apart.

No sooner had the door clicked shut behind her, she was pressed up against it, Simon's mouth enveloping hers in a kiss that was a long time in the making; she groaned under his touch, nails dragging down his clothed back while his found her ass, hoisting her up off the floor, her legs wrapping around him out of instinct. Her hands roamed his back, shoulders, arms; she'd been so curious, so enticed to touch him for ages, those thick, sturdy muscles flexing as he held her aloft. She felt him start to move, her back leaving the cold surface as he carried her to his bed. 'FINALLY!'

"Holy mother of pearl, twisted," he let their lips part momentarily, those dark as night eyes finding hers, bright as day. "The way you beat that smug little smirk off his face; I was ready to mount you right there." Her legs unwrapped to let her knees meet the mattress, lips and tongue meeting his again while she crawled backward, tugging him with her.

"Now who wants to get killed?" She quipped, teeth digging into his bottom lip, desperate to draw out the monster he'd previewed days before. "Negan would've tanned your hide."

"Let's not talk about him right now." There was an edge of annoyance in his tone, soon lost as she took her own initiative and dragged her shirt over her head, chest gasping and barely held within her black bra. He looked like he'd witnessed a miracle.

"Let's not; besides," again she took the lead, tearing at his shirt and sending buttons every which way. "You can mount me right here."

There was the incentive. She yelped as his strong arms shoved her down, body blanketing her as his hands finally found her tits; they felt just like he'd imagined. He'd earned a moan and the arch of her back, mouth hungry to eat up all the other sounds she could emit; hungry and willing he could've swallowed her whole. The next to go were her pants; the black, pocket heavy garment flung clear across the room. Simon had always been a fan of women in lingerie, and this woman made the shaggiest set of panties look top notch.

"Fuck..." he growled low, hands sliding up her thighs, stomach, squeezing her tits before cupping her cheeks, eyes and lips meeting. "You look even foxier than you did in that cell."

She laughed; it felt real on her tongue. The memory of his then strange eyes staring at her body had once brought a chill to her spine; now that same look inspired far warmer sensations. "Freedom looks good on me, huh?" He responded by tugging the straps from her shoulders, pulling her up to undo her clasps; it quickly joined the banishment of her fatigues.

"Everything looks good on you, psycho," he leaned back in, mustached kisses peppering her flesh,
his teeth scraping the swell of her breast with a sublime pinch. "But nothing at all looks fucking amazing."

She scoffed a laugh that turned to a moan, his impatient mouth and hands attacking her bosom; his lips created a seal around her budding nipple while his hand busied twisting and massaging at the other, growing to stiff peaks. "Unh... Simon..." she breathed while fingers worked into his hair, cupping his neck and pulling him flush; she squealed at a sharper bite into her skin, his head shooting up.

"Y' alright, doll?" He watched and waited as patiently as he could, though his fingers didn't leave her flesh. "Too hard?"

She glanced to the spot he'd bitten, on the inside of her tits, reddening with busted capillaries; it was overwhelming but intoxicating. "No, I...I like it," something about his safe, non-killing bites were strangely arousing; it felt risky, wicked. "Do it again."

'What did I do to deserve her?' He gave her a near sinister grin as his mouth fell to her again, working over her tits, chest, neck; his sharp white teeth digging in here and there, testing her threshold a fraction more with every bite. He still hadn't found her line as his lips dragged up her jaw, her breath hot and panting on his ear while he moved to her own ear, biting and suckling her lobe.

The sound he forced from her was a strained mewl, but one of pleasure and greed. "Mm I can't believe I waited this long," she groaned, letting her hands slide down his bare, rippling back, studying the power underneath. "Nn; I'm normally so impatient..." with a rapid move he slipped down her body, ripping the last layer she had from her hips.

"I'll make it worth your while, beautiful," Simon's fingers were a hair thinner than Negan's, but longer and somehow softer; she could feel the difference as he smoothed them over her hips in some trance like state. "We've got a long night ahead of us."

She raised her pelvis as her thighs spread; her slit was already moist and pinking with desire. "Then hop to it, bean pole," she purred, letting her arms drop back above her. "Show me what I've been missing."

He lost his khakis and underwear in quick succession, eager for skin to skin contact; he was far past excited as well, thick, hard as rock and ready to please. His was slightly longer than Negan's, but he didn't quite have his boss's girth; not that it made him any less inviting. Fussing with his bedside table he withdrew a condom, one of a sleeve, a relic of the past.

"Better safe than sorry," he muttered with a wink, tearing open the square packaging for the contents. "No need for rug rats around here, right?"

"Amen to that," she would've felt awkward stopping him had he been unprepared, but was thrilled to see that he was well equipped for the evening. She didn't exactly have the access to barriers the old world had allowed. "As good as it'd feel - you coming inside me - I'm not big on the consequences."

"I always liked smart girls," he purred, sliding the bright green sheath down his shaft, confident of its placement. He cloaked himself over her again, the underside of his length soaked in her fluids while their lips met, kisses furious and demanding; even though they were pleading for the same thing. He reached between their met flesh, the tip of his cock just meeting her entrance.

"You okay?" He asked, breathless; years of experience being in control had taught him to check in
with his partners, assure they were still saying yes. "Because once I start I don't know if I'll be able to stop."

"Then don't stop," her hands, still bruised from her fight, slid down as far as they would go, digging into his flesh as she bucked herself against him. "Let's scratch that itch." She found her head rolling back and muscles tensing then relaxing as the crown of his length slipped inside; she hadn't had a cock inside her since before the end, and despite the flood in her cavity, the initial fullness still ached. His mouth was gaping slightly as it brushed hers, shallow thrusts easing him in to her warmth.

"Good lord," he growled, allowing his hands to grip hers over her head, his stance widening for traction, balance. "What a woman." He watched her cautiously, waiting for any sign of discomfort to subside before sinking in completely, that added length finding new depths. Her body shuddered, an unexpected surrender finding her while she craned up to kiss him, his body rocking in deep, leisurely bucks. His irises were enveloped in the black of his pupils, lips hot as the trailed to her neck, feathery kisses falling haphazardly in time with his hips. The air was filled with the sounds of flesh meeting flesh, masculine grunts and soft, surprisingly feminine whimpers; Simon was attentive, focused, hitting every spot with intention, as if he'd known her body for years. The man was talented.

As good, as hot as it was, she sensed his apprehension; something in his thrusts was calculated, power measured out in an unequal part. The lust in his eyes couldn't hide the struggle in his face; she'd need to do a little coaxing. Freeing her fingers from his grip, they found his shoulder blades; her nails bit at his flesh and raked down, and almost immediately she felt a change, a brief crack in his armor. His following thrust was forceful, hitting her deepest places with aggression; he groaned as it petered off, returning to his careful fucking. 'So that's the trick.'

Next her teeth found his earlobe, licking and sinking in, resulting in another, unbridled buck of his body; harder this time, beginning to lose it. The snarl he loosed sat on an edge of desperation and barbarous, his eyes squeezed shut in concentration; he almost looked in pain, finally fucking her after waiting so long, and she didn't want that.

Quite the opposite.

"Simon." She breathed, his efforts slowing but not stopping completely, his eyes meeting hers.

"Somethin' wrong? Too big?" He smirked, letting his forehead rest on hers, just a slightly harder thrust sliding in.

"Y-you're holding back," she declared, her hands rising to cup his cheeks. His mouth formed a line as his brows turned up; she'd found him out. "You feel fucking fantastic; but I want you. All of you." His body shook as her wall clenched around him, wet, hot and pleading.

"Hot damn -- I-I'm not sure you know what you're askin' for, psycho," his body was still in check but his voice was lower, darker. "All of me is....alot."

"I know what I want," she retorted indignantly, her lips pressing to his, tongues hungry for each other's tastes. She felt his teeth scrape hers; the walls were beginning to fall. "Show me everything. Let me feel it."

His brows furrowed, an ominous glower taking over his features. "Are you sure?" He demanded. "Because I won't stop. For anything."

"Gimme."
He pulled out hurriedly, her pussy barely feeling the cold, unyielding air as he flipped her over like a doll, dragging her hips up off the mattress. She pushed herself onto her hands only to be shoved back down, her cheek pressed tight to his pillows with his digits gripping her hair.

"Face down. You don't move unless I move you," it barely sounded like Simon, dark and cruel; his other hand dealt a mean smack to her ass before he slammed into her depths again, all gentility from his previous efforts vanished. His hips pistoned in a violent claim of her sex, setting a bruising pace as both hands found her hips, dragging her back each time he fucked forward, brutal and harsh. "Fuck, this cunt... you made me wait so long, Delle," His nails, short but rounded, still managed to sear into her skin, marks explaining his ownership. "When I'm done I'll have this tight hole dripping when I walk by."

She whimpered against his bedding, drool no doubt soaking the cotton pillowcase; she'd had it rough before, but not like this. Simon was exercising every ounce of his vigor and stores of desire to power his movements; the angle at which his cock filled her was new, addicting, and he was waking things in her she didn't know had been asleep. He was a fiend, and she was lapping it up. "Oh god, fuck...!"

"God's not here, twisted," another well aimed spank found her ass, his speed and force unrelenting and greedy. "It's not god splitting you open right now, is it? Making you moan like a cock hungry slut?"

She only moaned, not the answer he was looking for. She screamed as one hand dug through her mane again, pulling her up. "Answer me, Delle!" He was savage, brutish and everything she wanted in the moment.

"Y-you are, Si," she strained under his grasp, those hips never ceasing, his manhood carving out a space uniquely his inside her. "Fuck, Simon, you feel so good!"

His front met her back as he hoisted her up, never leaving the confines of her soaked pussy, his pounding angled upwards while he turned her head to claim her mouth with his own. "I want you sore for weeks, crazy," he muttered against her mouth, the snap of his hips almost guaranteeing his wish. "Every time you wince it's gonna be 'cause of me." His hands slid round her body, his right one loving and tender, searching out her clit and giving her some much needed attention; the other harsh and exploring, digits wrapping around her neck and beginning to close off her air.

She choked and gasped at first, her hands flying to his arm in a plea for freedom, but the sideways expression on his face told her she'd pay for acting out. She held on tightly, his teeth sinking into her shoulder and neck, hungry for every inch of her; despite a little fear, Delle could feel his throttling working for her; her walls twitched and sang around him, starting to constrict as her vision spotted.

"Fuck you are made to take my cock, aren't you?" He grinned and eased on his hold, listening to her gulp for air before closing his fingers again; in the meantime his second hand viciously attacked the bud of nerves below, eager for her release. "Yeah, look at you; you were built to be my personal fucking cock sleeve..." He knew she was nearly there; he was too. It had been too long since he'd been with someone who let him exercise this side, and it was doing him in. Her slicked hole sounded with every thrust, drenched and used, running down his length, balls, her thighs; she was right at the edge now.

"S-si..." she croaked, her vision swimming, tingling and trembling with the oncoming climax. He released her throat briefly to kiss her, his mustache scratching her raw lips and clasping her neck
"Come for me, you twisted little slut," her eyes rolled back in her head as she let go, unraveling as her abused pussy seized around his length, screaming for him and triggering his own orgasm, falling forward into the bed, biting into her skin hard enough to feel a tear and taste blood. "F-fuck, Delle!" He couldn't stop his hips, winding into her over and over as he came, his hand having left her neck to steady himself on his forearm. He drew it out as long as he could, the assault on her clit slowing to lazy circles, firm but caring, as the thrusts finally broke to a resting, sweaty stop.

She hummed into the pillow where her face was buried, wriggling for air; the rage in him sated, he was quick to rise from her, withdrawing himself from her ache carefully and disposing of the trusty barrier between them. She turned her head but couldn't find the strength to roll, her body sore, as promised. Simon, now sorted, laid at her side, gentle and receptive.

"Are you okay?" He murmured against her shoulder - the unbitten one- applying light pecks wherever he could. "Was it too much?"

In her glowing haze she managed a smile with dazed eyes. "It was fucking perfect." She conjured strength in her hand to reach up, stroking his cheek in earnest. Even then the dull ache of the bruises and bites he'd left behind made her excited rather than hurt. "I've never... that was very new for me."

He gave an understanding smile, his long fingers tracing patterns on her back. "Had a hunch... surprised you were into it."

"Why's that?"

"You're a rule breaker," he chuckled, the same hand turning her, his front against her back in a far less aggressive position. "Didn't think you'd like being broken."

Her nature flared to life. "It's gonna take more than that to break me," she grumbled, but not without a sneaky smile on her lips. "It's just... nice to let go a little bit, once in awhile."

" 'Once in awhile'?" He cooed, nipping her ear and feeling her body tense. "I don't think I can wait for once in awhile; pretty sure I'm hooked."

"Careful, bean pole," she closed her eyes, their bodies' activities beginning to wear on her. "Somebody might think you're going soft."

"You'll have to correct them for me. I'm anything but soft." He wasn't wrong there. She simply scoffed; fatigue was starting to pull her into sleep, more than earned and necessary. Her head spun with the dregs of her inebriation, the high Simon had obliged her; Negan was as far from her thoughts as he'd ever been.

But he wasn't gone. Never gone.

The door was rattling as the sun's rays filtered through the ceiling high windows; her body was aching and bruised, but moreover she was just annoyed with being jolted awake.

"Mm fuck," she pouted, Simon slowly finding wakefulness himself. "The sun's barely up, what the
The arm that had snaked around her waist in sleep pulled her close as he planted a kiss on her temple. "Go back to sleep, I'll see what's what," before rising he grabbed a hefty handful of her ass, squeezing with a wink. "We'll go for round two later."

She smiled and let herself sink back into the sheets, watching her partner slide his boxer briefs back up his legs before crossing the room; he hadn't even touched the knob before the sound from the other side of the door knocked the air from her lungs.

"Simon! Get your ass up!"

'Oh no.' Were all the words she could think of, curving up in the bed before slipping down the side, crawling underneath in practiced fashion, her heart racing and breaking out in a cold sweat. She couldn't imagine what Negan would do, finding her there; she pictured Simon's blood and brains spattering across his bedroom walls.

Simon was thankful for his smart girl, trying to calm himself before answering Negan's prompt at his door.

"Bout fuckin' time," he was in his leathery getup, his face locked in a furious scowl. "You expect me to stand here all damn day?" His grip on Lucille was tighter than usual, his glove flexed tight around her handle.

"Apologies; tequila is a cruel mistress," he gave an apologetic smirk peeking through the slight crack in his door. "Where do you want me?"

Negan's eyes shifted a moment; down the line of the door before rising, slowly, back to his lieutenant's face. "My darling wife-to-be went and high tailed it in the middle of the fucking night," he explained, seeing the utter shock in Simon's reaction. "With that little dipshit family of hers."

"Fucking hell," Simon was legitimately baffled; no wife had ever tried to make a break for it, much less one in failing health. "I knew she was young but I didn't think she was stupid."

"Seems so," his boss spat back; the topic seemed to be infuriating him by the second. "Get your gear; Wade and his boys are already looking. I want her found, and those morons who ran with her."

"Sure thing." As Simon went to shut his door, Lucille wedged into the jam, Negan's eye hard on him.

"One last thing," he mumbled, his voice a low thunder. "Haven't seen that little shit Delle anywhere; she was close with them. You seen her?"

'Every inch.' He shook away his mind's initial, primal thought in favor of one that wouldn't get himself killed. "Can't say I have, Negan," he gave an Academy award winning shrug, raising his brows. "Doubt she'd run off on us though."

'Us.' Again Negan's gaze flicked downward, away from Simon. "If you see her, send her straight to me," he ordered. "She's her fucking friend, she'll be the one to find her."

"Yes sir." Simon obliged, but Negan was already stomping away. He breathed, shutting the door, but they were far from safe.
Negan sauntered down his halls like a wounded beast, his heart twisted in a vice grip of his own making. It wasn't the fact that the girl he was marrying to save had run from him. It wasn't that the woman he loved had set it in motion. It wasn't even the question of if she'd done all of this on purpose, just to fuck with his head.

It was the sight of an all too familiar red top crumpled on Simon's floor, the unmistakable smell of sex that oozed from the room, and the lies on his right hand man's lips.

'How could she do this?'

Chapter End Notes

...and this seems like a good spot to take a break!

Taking a few days to recharge, get a surplus going again; we're beginning to join up with the story proper, so I'll be doing alot of episode research!
leave me a comment! Your words help my words flow!
I'll be back soon. Delle has far more to do.
Chapter 44

Chapter Notes

Did you miss me? 'Cause I sure missed you.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Before...

Just as quickly as he'd shed her from her clothes was she tugging them back on, a look on her face of indistinguishable emotion. Wiping his mouth he crossed the room for the door before she could.

"Delle, hold on," he splayed his hand against the door, though she stood across the room, the plastic chair acting as a barrier between them. "Don't get your panties in a knot, it's a figure of speech--"

"--is it? She dragged the zipper up her jacket, trying to decide if she could shimmy out of the air duct if needed. "Just a figure of speech? Why the fuck would you say that? Ever since you that fucking away game you've been going on and on about liking me -- and then that night in your truck..." she could barely finish the sentence, let alone think of the night in question - it was as confusing and complicating as it was lust inducing.

"I... I know," he began; the young wildfire was roaring, and if he wasn't careful he would wind up burned alive. "What I meant was, I've always liked you -- as a person -- it's not some mindless little high school crush." 'Well you're right about that,' his conscience was on his last nerve. 'It's way beyond that now.'

She swallowed thickly, running her hands around her waist to squeeze her own middle. "Not some crush. Right," she shook her head, watching his face. "It's... maybe we should stop.

He felt like his heart had dropped out of his chest, the very suggestion seemed like the end of the world. He was hooked on her, every rough edge and word had snagged him and drove him closer, deeper; how could she rip that away? "No." He rolled the word in his mouth, brows knit and eyes narrowed.

"We can't keep doing this, Negan!" She threw up her hands before they tented against her temples, stress tying a tight knot in her skull. "I should've said no, I shouldn't have come back down here once I knew you were married -- how could I be so stupid?"

"You're not stupid," he declared, crossing the room to join her, hands on her hips despite how her body shivered in his touch. "We're not that simple, is all."

"What is this 'we'!? There is no 'we'!" She growled and thumped her fists against his chest while her body screamed for him not to let go - he didn't. "There can't be a 'we'! No matter how you or I feel there isn't a version of this with us running off into the sunset."
He knew she was right; even if they could leave, anywhere they went they'd be marked, tainted. He looked old enough to be her father, and if the school caught wind of him fucking one of his ex students... but what had caught his ear was something she hadn't admitted before. She was feeling for him. "How is it I make you feel, Delle?" He asked, the shadow of a smirk playing at his lips.

"Fucking shit, Negan, of course you'd latch on to that," she rolled her eyes so hard her head hurt, more than it already did. "I'm not doing this with you."

"Why not?" He stepped forward, backing her up till her ass hit the desk she'd been planted on earlier. "Sharing is caring, little miss Delle; I'll show you mine if you show me yours."

Her blood bubbled in fury, face scrunching up in annoyance. "You... you make me feel like a monster," she started, never losing his eye. "You have me feeling all this guilt, and I tried to make it all about the sex, but there you go with your fucking feelings; and I can't stop wanting you, and I feel like some lovesick, idiotic teenager--"

"Sorry, what was that?" He tapped a finger to his ear, putting on a show to maintain his excitement. "What did you say?"

'Fucking hell - now you've said it too,' her better angels hissed, the word playing over in her head like a broken record - lovesick, lovesick, lovesick. 'He's not yours, he never will be.' "It doesn't matter what I said," she tried to dodge his questioning. "Even if I did feel that way - AND I DON'T - it'd only hurt more. You're..."

"What, Delle? What am I?" He prompted, one hand rising to her cheek, searching her face. There was love in there alright; she would've left right away if there wasn't. But it was mixed with loads of painful emotions, evident by her eyes' growing glassy and wet.

"You're not mine," she barely whispered, his eyes and face softening. How badly they wished she was wrong. "You never will be."

He had never seen her so open, so raw; without saying the words she was admitting to those feelings she kept denying, admitting to the torture it was to feel for him. 'I'm hurting her,' He'd known it since the moment he'd kissed her the first time, but this time it was as if he was experiencing her pain first hand. 'I...I can't let her go.'

"I'm sorry, Delle," he breathed while his arms wound around her body, pulling her into an apologetic embrace. His fingertips stroked her back, memorizing her warmth and the smell of her hair on the chance that she'd never let him do so again. "I know I keep apologizing, but I am really and truly sorry."

She sniffled in response, her challenging eyes blinking up at him.

"I just... I never meant for all this to happen. The sex, yeah, that's on me - I knew I was going to fuck you the moment I saw that ass in those fishnets," he couldn't help a smile at the memory, always inappropriate at the worst times. "But I... I never expected to feel like I do. You're on my mind constantly, I'm worrying like a woman about what you think of me, hell I just proved I'm a jealous son of a bitch not 15 minutes ago," his hands cupped her face which grew more nervous by the second. "These things you do to me, Delle; I... I fuckin' swear, honest, I've never felt like this before."
"Why the fuck is he saying all this!?" The look on his face was sweet but not without sorrow; but to hear him confess what she had him feeling only twisted the knife in her heart. She was chained to her life as much as he was to his; theirs were two paths never meant to cross as they had, but somewhere along the way they'd begun carving a new one of their own. Whether or not she could keep going wasn't a question; it was whether she could ever go back. "Why do I want him to keep talking?"

He must've sensed her wish, continuing. "I wish I could leave you be, Delle; I wish I could let you go on your merry goddamn way, but you're... mine," that deep, possessive tone shook her to her center every time - even when she willed it not to. "Delle I lo--"

"Don't you dare fucking say it, you cruel bastard," her words felt like ice water down his back. "I'm not yours, no more than you're mine. Our entire... whatever this is, only exists behind closed doors."

"What's wrong with that?" He asked in earnest; his hands had dropped to her hips, keeping her grounded. "Why can't we just be for us?"

"Because you act like I'm your property!" She exclaimed, her fingertips against the hair of his forearms. "Why's he got to feel so good?"

"You didn't seem to be minding that when my head was between those legs." He purred with a haughty air, reaching down to grasp her thigh. It was true that the way he'd reacted had excited her in the moment; but once down from their own personal cloud it only reminded her there was no claim for him to stake.

"What would you do?" She sighed, finding his gaze. "If you saw some fucker getting flirty, what could you possibly do? 'Hey man back off, that's my girlfriend you're ogling'?" Her eyes fought tears for having used such a serious term, but it fit in the moment.

"I'd sooner let my world burn than see another man grab at you," she was shocked at the fury in his answer, his face steadfast and committed. "If it meant losing you, I'd... I'd let it all go."

She couldn't believe her ears; she actively tried to suppress her heart soaring, her mind admonishing her ridiculous sentimentality. "W-- do you even hear yourself right now!? Goddamn it; I never took you for an idiot, Negan! Fuck!"

"Hey--"

"No, no! I can't believe you! You've built up this whole life for yourself; even if you're marriage is going up in flames, you've got a goddamn world! And you just..." her self hating side was beginning to take over. "You're going to go throwing that all away for some... some stupid, inane townie with a nice ass?" Well, not all hate.

"Don't talk about yourself like that!" His grip tightened. "Goddamn; you know I don't think of you that way. And I won't fuckin' have to if we can just sort this shit out," her body seemed to relax slightly; maybe she wasn't running from him. Maybe he just had to convince her to stay. "I can't keep myself from feeling things here, but there's not a snowball's chance in hell that we're stopping this. We just gotta be smart. We plan ahead. We keep our shit tight. And we don't fuck with each other's heads." He tapped his forehead to hers then, watching her carefully, gauging her reaction. "You don't even have to like me; hell... hate me if you want. But you can't stop me from feelin' however I damn well please."

It was the plan they'd worked out that night in his truck, before the unforgettable and unnamable sex
they'd shared; it would allow their illicit little rendezvous to remain secret, and as much as she would use her body's urge for him as an excuse, those moments when they weren't at each other's throats soothed her heart like little else.

"That's all you, you fucking geezer," she let herself succumb to his touch, arms curving under his and head leaning against his chest; fights with Negan almost always left her exhausted. *'He's got a real talent for tiring me out.'* "You're terrible."

"I'm aware," he snickered, stroking her back. He'd managed to calm her down, pull her back to earth; but how long would he be able to keep her tethered? "You give me all the shit you need to for it, doll."

The warmth of his chest on her cheek was lulling her into a trance; his scent like home. "...can't believe you went and caught feelings," she knocked her fist against his arm; lightly, teasingly. "You're such a girl."

He was taken off guard, to hear her griping him over how he felt about her so easily; but quickly reasoned it was a coping mechanism. *'Whatever keeps her here.'* "Sure am, sweetheart." He buried a kiss in her thick hair, eyes closing. She wasn't running.

Not for now.

Chapter End Notes

Hi guys! I'm back! Took a much needed week to recharge the batteries and get my story layout sorted; new ideas abound!

If you like my stuff (or just missed me ;) let me know with a comment below! Your words keep me writing, and I'm always inspired by your comments!!

♡♡♡♡
Chapter 45

Chapter Notes

New Negan is beginning to take over...

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Delle found Negan at his truck, foot bobbing impatiently against a tire and an expression darker than night on his face. She’d readied in a hurry - barely exchanging a word with Simon before leaving him, half nude and gobsmacked - and took extra care of wearing every layer of clothing she owned. A black scarf and hoodie obscured her head and neck underneath her red leather, wearing her same fatigues and boots from the night before.

"And where the fuck were you, you little shit?" Lucille sat proudly on his shoulder, so much so she could almost feel a smug air wafting from the inanimate object. "Gettin' your goddamn beauty sleep get in the way of your fuckin' job?"

'Motherfucker say one more word and I'll fuck Simon right in front of you--' silencing her demons she chose a safer route. Like all other Saviors, she dipped to her knee, bowing her head in respect; and perhaps a little shame. "I'm sorry Negan," she mumbled, before rising to his eye again. "Guess I should've paced myself last night. Beer knocked me on my ass."

'Bullshit; I know how she handles her booze,' He ground his teeth and debated forcing her back inside, never to leave Sanctuary again. 'She's gotten to be a terrible fucking liar.' "Try thinkin' ahead next time," he grunted, giving a nod for her to climb into the passenger side while he took his place at the wheel. "You know what we're doin' today?"

She sat with her thigh wedged against the door; as far from him as she could get. Glancing over she chose to play dumb, although she'd heard him telling Simon what had happened. "Somethin' big to pull you from your new wife." She fibbed as he turned his keys, the vehicle trundling out of the gates.

His jaw ticked, annoyed and betrayed. "Gold star for you, champ," he growled, letting his gaze drift to her. "That little fuckin' fiancée of mine took off last night. Beer knocked me on my ass."

She tried her best to mirror the disbelief she'd felt when she'd heard the first time; it was a genuine reaction, perplexed as to why Tina would run when she was inches away from staying alive. 'Negan isn't all that bad.'

'Then why don't YOU marry him?'

"Holy mother of fuck," she gasped, crossing her arms and growing wide eyed. "That... what was she thinking?"

"Beats the fuck outta me!" He scoffed in a steely snicker. "Took her little family with her -- and all the goddamn insulin they could get their dirty thieving paws on," this gasp sounded more real; maybe Delle really didn't know. "Thought maybe you'd have some insight?" His mouth was a tight
"I had no fucking idea," she spoke truthfully. She couldn't imagine why Tina had taken off; she had to realize she wouldn't live long on the outside of the walls. Sure she was young, but she had to be aware of the likelihood of her survival without protection. Without kindness. "This... this could not have been a stupider idea!"

"Seems I'm marrying an idiot," he grunted, turning onto a new road. He'd plotted a path that morning, sending his men out in all directions; Simon's route was as far from them as he could get. "If we even fuckin' find her."

"I-I really am sorry, Negan," was she apologizing for Tina or for fucking Simon? He couldn't tell if she knew he knew yet; but she'd know soon, either way. "I really didn't see this happening. I thought she was smarter than this; a girl in her situation, with her disease... I can't believe she'd run."

"Guess she doesn't know the Negan you do." He huffed out a grouchy breath, his eyes never leaving the road. It was true; the Negan she'd known, who he was around her was not who he could be for the Sanctuary. There were elements that crossed over between them - his ridiculous mouth, that unwavering confidence - but in a world full of monsters, it took a monster to keep people alive. Delle still couldn't decide if the monster was who he had to be or simply who he truly was.

"Even still," she protested, despite her doubts. "This set up... it would at least keep her alive. It's not the worst thing in the world."

"Then why didn't YOU marry me?" His inner self was aching to tear something apart, anything; he hoped he could control himself til he had an option other than her. "Let's see if she's still playin' a damsel in distress when we find the spineless cowards." He pulled to the side of the road, checking his map before exiting, Delle following suit. As usual Fang sat dutifully on her back, ready to be swung in defence or offence. He lead the way initially, her keeping close behind while listening for any voices, watching for any movement amongst the bare limbed trees and mulched ground.

"You look like a nun today," he remarked, taking note of the walking corpse that was ambling up to them. He thanked a dead god for the opportunity to crush it's gooey skull, which he did with more gusto than necessary. "Slinkin' that body around last night have you feelin' bashful?"

She glanced down at her clothing; on an unseasonably warm day she'd opted for layer upon layer of disguise, anything to hide how Simon had made his mark. While it turned her on in private she knew the sight would send Negan off the handle. "Slinkin' that body around last night have you feelin' bashful?"

Panic ensued; she tried to wrench free from his hold but his hand had slipped to her back, keeping her steady. "I'll pass, pops," she muttered, pressing her hands to his chest in a meager attempt to push free. "Not the time or place, is it?"

"The time and place is where and whenever the fuck I want," that low, rolling growl in his threat said he meant it. His other arm hooked higher and she could feel the barbs of Lucille catching the bottom of her pants. "C'mon sweetheart; nobody's around, no one's gonna know..."
She wriggled again, dragging her head back as he dipped his for a kiss he wouldn't get. "I said no, Negan; what's gotten into you?"

'Who's gotten into you?' He knew the answer and cursed himself for thinking of the question in the first place. "What can I say; my would-be wife ran off, maybe I'm feelin' a little... cheated." The look he gave her sent chills through her core; it was a look she'd seen before, only once or twice, mixed with something else. Something lethal.

"And I'm tickled pink to help you find her; but I'm not gonna be her placeholder til we do!" With a spine twisting slip and slid out from under his grasp, taking a few cautious steps back. "The hell is wrong with you?"

"Oh, that list is long, sweetcheeks," he made a sound similar to a chuckle, steeped in malice and followed her step, a tree close to coming up behind her. "Now I've got a question for you, little shit. Betcha can't guess it."

For the first time since arriving in Negan's new world, she saw the devil he'd become firsthand; he was out in full force and she was scared. *This is what they see when they look at him,* "Beats the fuck outta me." She mumbled his own words back to him as her back hit bark, heels skewing on a complex root system; where to hide now? *This is why she ran.*

"Awe C'mon; don't be such a sad sack!" His words were thunder, pounding in her ears. "You're a smart girl, put that fucked up little mind to work, get those gears a’turning!"

*For such a smart girl I can be real goddamn stupid,* She thought to herself, eyes studying, watching his actions. "Y-you better not be fixing to ask me to be a wife." She attempted sounding threatening but wound up whimpering. *You're better than this, girl!*

He let out a buzz between his teeth, his height curving around her like a net. "Dead wrong, Delle; seems that 'hangover' fucked up your brain," she watched his trademark grin slowly trickle from his face, the emotions it was hiding now in plain view - rejection, grief, savagery. "No no, my question is this," his ungloved hand came up fast, grasping her chin firm and distorting her lips as he held her still. "What the hell were your clothes doing on Simon's floor?"

Her eyes widened - not out of surprise, she suspected he knew the moment she'd seen him at the truck - she went bug-eyed out of fear. Pressed between the tree and Negan's unbreaking stare, he was the least his old self that she'd ever seen. It was almost as if a stranger had her pinned, clenching her jaw in their grip; but no stranger would be staring her down the way he was. He had years of reasons to look at her that way.

"Go on Delle. Tell me," he seethed through gritted teeth. "And say it nice and slow, I love the sounds you make when you lie."

Her blood boiled up and her mouth ran away from her. "I don't fucking lie to you, Negan," it was a mean hiss despite her situation. "Never have - not like you."

He saw red; didn't even notice his hand moving downward, clutching her throat against the bark. "No excuses then?"

Her hands flew to his grip, grasping at his leather coated arm; he was digging into the fresh purple welts from the night before, and as much as it stung she didn't want to think of how he'd react if he saw them. "Simon and I... I'm still my own damn person, Negan, I can choose who I fuck!"
He practically roared, his body pressing hers as his thigh divided her at the hips; she winced in desire and sensitivity, still a little swollen. "If I'd known you were going to be some two dollar whore runnin' around my house fucking my men, I would've sent your ass packing weeks ago." These words were on par with those they'd parted ways with, cutting her deep and wetting her eyes. He saw the response in her, told himself he didn't care. 'I'll give her somethin' to cry about.'

"F-fuck you, Negan!" That fire in her wasn't getting snuffed out. "I'm not a whore for your men! You're just weepy 'cause I don't want your dick anymore!" 'Oh you should not have said that.' Her angels could nearly see her future as soon as the words left her lips.

"Oh that's rich! And you say you never lied to me," he rocked his hips upward, forcing a cry from her unwillingly; he had no idea it was due to the bruises in her flesh. "Correct me if I'm wrong but I seem to recall that tight little cunt gushing on my fingers barely two weeks ago," he ground his leg up between the apex of her thighs, a heated mix of pain, pleasure and panic brewing in her core. "You're gonna pretend you didn't want me to fuck you down memory lane? Huh?" He grabbed at her shoulder and she audibly shrieked; more than his pressure warranted. 'Shit; which shoulder did she get shot in again?'

He recoiled at the sight of her pained, realizing that it wasn't the right shoulder. She stared up at him livid while her hands pulled at her extra layers; what was she hiding? "...why all the layers, Delle?" His voice was somehow softer and colder at once, his hands reaching for her zippers; her attempts to keep him at bay were swatted away with ease, tugging at her clothes. "What don't you want me to see?"

"Stop it, Negan! Get the fuck off!" She demanded to deaf ears, his fingers grasping her scarf. 'Oh no.'

As it fell away his eyes shot wide, his body stilling with the scrap of yarn in his hand, Simon's purple handprints impressed on her neck. That's all it could've been; the clear image of long fingers, thumbs digging into her tender flesh. 'I forgot how easy she bruises.'

Before she could move away he was pulling at her clothes, shoving down the material on her unaffected - or so he thought - shoulder. Another bruise met him there, a clear hoop of a bite; tiny scabs where teeth had split the skin.

"I'll fucking kill him," he snarled; he had never seen anything so ugly in his life. Her beautiful skin, the same that would bead with sweat from his advances, marred, cut and abused. "I'll wring his goddamn neck - thinks he can hurt you--"

"--Negan stop," he couldn't help but feel a calming sensation spread from her palm across his chest as they met; even if the words to follow would make his skin crawl. "I... I let him hurt me... I liked it."

He stared down at her and for the first time in he couldn't remember how long, he had no words. She didn't hide her eyes from him, but the look she gave him was one like an open wound; she was bearing herself so plainly, in a way only meant for him. 'If only her body was meant for you too.' He had a thousand questions blurring in his mind, though none could dwarf his wrath and heartbreak. Slowly his hand slid to her arm, the fabric bouncing back to conceal the bite; but not the necklace of bruising she wore.

"N-Negan..." She'd spoken that name so softly hundreds of times - either in his presence or alone -
but this was the first time she could remember him looking so hurt. Whatever words she had, if any at all, were interrupted by the sound of static and an artificial voice; the radio at Negan's hip buzzed to life, offering a brief reprieve from their conversation. She wasn't sure if she was thankful for the pause.

"...Negan, do you copy? Found them..." she tried to guess which gruff Savior had nabbed the runaways, how they'd be rewarded for it; and how her only three friends would be punished. Negan didn't lose eye contact with her as he lifted the radio to his lips.

"Good job, Wade," that was the voice she couldn't place. "Where are ya?"

"Twelfth quadrant," the voice crackled back, a long, pregnant pause droning in the air. "There's... there's only two of them. The girl is gone."

Chapter End Notes

Oh no... oh no no no.

It's gonna get pretty dark around here for a hot minute, guys; buckle in and watch some puppy videos because nothing good is happening here.

Til then I hope you're enjoying the story so far!! Leave me a comment if you like this, as your words help to keep me inspired and writing! Love you guys! ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 46

Chapter Notes

TW: discussion of rape

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Before...

The buses had stopped running by the time Delle left Negan's office. He'd offered her a ride to wherever she wanted to go, but after yet another fight she had run out of energy for him; a kiss had soothed his worries, one she promised wasn't their last, before bundling into the night. Her arms hugged her body as she listened to the silence of the night, trying and failing to mirror that silence in her mind. Her self was at war.

"You can't keep lying to yourself forever; you know how you feel about him."

"He's just for fun; he's candy! Have him and forget about it!"

"She's gaga for him; guess all those teenage girl feelings came bubbling back; always was a late bloomer!"

"Motherfuck!" She shouted at the top of her lungs, her heel finding a half empty garbage can to empty some frustrations. The aluminium receptacle clattered in the cold of the night, ringing in her ears as it stilled in the road. The action had done little to comfort her seething frustrations, overwhelmed by her own behavior.

"How does he keep doing this to me?" She asked the stars overhead, knowing they'd yield no answer. "Why do I let him do this to me?"

She didn't feel like herself; but a part of her wondered if this was who she'd always been, falling over her heels for a man like Negan. 'No, not a man LIKE Negan - only Negan.' It was an unforgiving truth that while she'd always found herself attracted to men similar to her ex coach, nobody ever did it for her like him. The power he'd once held over her in the form of an educator, how he'd been forgiving despite her unruly nature; that had always been key. He'd felt her flames and hadn't flinched. If anything he stuck his hand in for more.

'He can do whatever the fuck he wants; because you know how he feels, deep down,' those pesky devils were playing some sick version of a conscience, trying to convince her of their desires. 'Sure he might be Mister Bossy-dick now, but if you say the word he'll drop everything for you; say the word and he'll run to the ends of the earth for you.' Boys of her past had claimed their love for her before; normally for her ass or her tits, some unworking spell to try and keep her under their thumbs. None had ever acted like Negan, though; demanding but accommodating, possessive but pliant. As long as she was his, that's what mattered.
"I'm not his, though," she murmured alone, scuffing her old trainers as she muddled her way through town. "I can't be his when someone else already has the fuckin' job..."

'Aha! So you do want to be his!' The demons celebrated.

'You know better than that! You're not going to go wishing for some man you can't have like some soap opera ingenue, now are you?'

'Are you?'

Her thoughts were paused by the digital chirping of her cellphone; pulling it from its confines she saw an unknown number flash across the screen.

'At least it's not more of Negan.' She considered herself blessed as she flipped the phone open, pressing it to her ear. "Hello?"

"D-Delle?" Fang's voice was shaking on the other end of the line, crackling amidst background sounds.

"Fang? You alright buddy?" He didn't call unless there was an emergency; it set her teeth on edge. "I... I'm at the police station... there was an accident, Holly got arrested," she wasn't sure if the sirens she heard were on his end of the line or just in her head. "Could you...could you come get me?"

"Arrested!?!" She hissed, trying to formulate a plan; the station was on the other side of town, just past the freeway. She'd be lucky if she got there in four hours, and the air was getting colder by the minute. "What the fuck did she do!?"

"I --" the smug dial tone of a dropped call sang into her ear; she'd been cutting it close on minutes and fate had deemed her to run out at the worst possible time. She stared at the bright screen, aghast, furious and worried sick; Fang was never the one to get in trouble, Delle was the expert there. She bounced her weight from hip to hip nervously, trying to figure out the best course of action; try running all the way there? And what then?

Find a payphone and call the station collect, hope they accept the charges? She ran her fingers through her hair before releasing a half growl half whine, letting herself bob on her toes; just in time for familiar headlights to catch her back in the dark.

"Now what's got this Timberwolf howlin' like that?" She was on the fence about being cursed or blessed to hear Negan's deep purr emanating from inside the truck as it sidled up next to her. She brought her eyes to meet his through the right sided window; however she looked must've been concerning as it quickly wiped his cheeky grin from his face.

"What's wrong, Delle?"

She tugged the passenger door open, to explain what had just transpired. "Fang's at the police station," he looked as stunned as she felt, his mouth falling open slightly. "He just called me, I -- I ran out of minutes," she glanced down a moment. "His girlfriend got arrested, the line dropped before he could tell me what happened, I--"

"Get in," he commanded, giving his head a jerk to allow her access to the cab. For this, she was thankful; whatever got her to her brother faster, even if it were him. She scrambled in, sliding on the
old nylon seat belt, her leg bouncing a mile a minute with stress. He saw it, the panic in her, reaching out and laying an affectionate hand against her thigh. "We'll go get all this shit sorted out, Delle. I'm not goin' anywhere til our little ace is safe." His phrasing made it sound as if Fang was more their son than her brother; but she couldn't worry about that. Everything went to Fang, alone, scared, and needing her.

The Sargeant at the intake desk was less than accommodating when they reached the station - the Cornish name carried a stigma thanks to its patriarch and untamed daughter. The officer - Harrod - gave a roll of the eyes as he saw her coming.

"What'd you do this time, Delle?" He groaned, crossing his arms. "Or is Pops in the tank again?"

Her father had spent many nights sleeping off stupors and nursing injuries from misbegotten fights there; despite her feelings she'd always come to sign him out when she could.

"I didn't do shit, Harrod," she scowled, eyes hard to keep the tears back. "I'm here for my brother, E-Eric Thomas Cornish."

The Sargeant blinked, surprised to hear the name; he'd seen the boy play in a few ballgames, and despite his less than illustrious bloodline he'd never got himself in trouble. He leafed through the clipboard at his side, reading through names.

"...oh," his face grew uncomfortable, twitchy. For police he wasn't great at hiding the issue of the moment. "I... we can't release him to you; not yet."

"THAT'S FUNNY BECAUSE THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO," She roared, slamming her fists down onto the far side of the desk. "I'm here to get my brother, get the fuck out of here, and not wind up killing the stupid fucking girl who got him here in the first place--"

"--watch it, Cornish! That kind of talk will get you a cell for the night too--"

"--fucking good! Put me right next to her I'll rip her throat out through the bars! Just give me my brother and we'll be on our happy fucking way!"

"Easy, Delle," Negan had finally joined her, the truck parked outside. He strode up to her little altercation, that suave smile plastered across his face. "Tough cookie isn't she?" He thumbed in her direction with a laugh, beginning to settle the officer's nerves. They knew each other vaguely, enough for Negan to find an in. "Was hopin' I could get my champ out of here."

"I'm afraid he can only be released to a parent or guardian, Coach," most knew him and called him that. "Produce Mr.Cornish and the boy's free to go."

"That's utter crap! You know fucking well my Dad's probably drunk off his ass somewhere! I'm not leaving witho--" she stopped when Negan clapped a heavy hand onto her shoulder, allowing his head to dip in a confident nod.

"Now officer," he threw on his best grin. "Delle here looks after the boy like he was her own as is; kid would probably be dead without her," 'Does he really mean that?' She mused, listening to his yarn. "She's a guardian and then some; not to mention you've got a fine, upstanding adult standing
right here," he gestured to himself with a chuckle. "I'll bet my ass the boy's done nothin' wrong. So instead of holding a minor in unjust custody and refusing to give his fucking family information about his goddamn well being, how about you waltz him out here before I need to go over your head?" The grin was still there but his eyes and voice were raging. Negan didn't get 'no' very often.

"I-I can see if he's-- if we're--" Negan's bravado had managed to ruffle the Sargeant, rising from his seat in a fluster.

"Y'know, Captain Wilson and I go way back," he threw the name out because it was true; they'd been friends awhile, even if he didn't like him much. "We were Varsity together. Don't suppose he's hangin' around? Would love to catch up."

'Fuck, he's old,' Somehow in their dalliances Delle always managed to forget the age gap between them; but the mild threat worked, Harrod scurrying back through the offices to fetch their goal. "T-thanks, Negan." She mumbled, looking up to him; his gaze was gentle again, his hand in the small of her back in this brief moment of privacy. 'He feels so right...'

"Delle!" Negan's hand snapped to his side as Fang came into view, his sister's heart dropping at the sight of him; he looked as though he'd been put through the ringer, scrapes adorning his cheek and neck, a few drops of blood staining his shirt. As soon as he crossed the threshold into public space her arms locked around him, cradling her much bigger sibling as his body shook with fear and sobs. For all his prowess on the field he was still just a fifteen year old boy.

"It's okay kiddo, I'm here," her voice was as soft and comforting she could make it; Negan noticed how sweet it sounded and wondered if she might ever talk that way to him. "It's alright, let's get you out of here."

She signed the checkout forms with an X after much pleading from Harrod; she just wanted to leave. "We'll give you a call if we need anymore info from you." He was trying to sound authoritative; and Delle wasn't having it.

"You leave us alone." She hissed, locking her hand with her brother's as she stomped from the station; if she was never back again it would be too soon.

Safely outside, Delle held Fang's face between her palms as she studied it; his eyes were puffy and red, the scratches on his cheek mean and scabbing. "Eric," she said it slowly; now didn't seem like the time for his nickname. "What happened?"

His lip trembled, another swell of tears cresting in his big brown eyes. "W...we were just driving... I didn't know she was d-drinking--" His stare went to his coach, who'd joined them by the step. He was wary to continue sharing, unsure if a teacher would be obligated to inform the school of what happened.

Negan seemed to sense his apprehension. "I'll be in the truck," he gave his star player a squeeze on his shoulder, a strong nod. "Take all the time you need." He made good on his word, wandering over to his old pick up.

"Go on, champ; it's okay. Nobody's gonna hurt you." She reached up and stroked his hair assuredly, trying to give him a smile.

"She... she kept trying to grab at me while driving... I should've just hopped out when I smelled the beer, I know," the heel of his hand pressed to his eyes, coming away damp with tears. "S-she
wouldn't stop, she stuck her hand down -- down m-my--" She pulled him in crushingly tight, curving her hand around his head as he sobbed; he wasn't made for this. "She swerved, and I panicked... I just rolled out of the car."

"Oh god," she choked down a sob of her own, trying to keep herself from crying; he needed her to be her very strongest. "Fuck."

"She hit a lamp post pretty hard... I-I think they said she got a concussion? I called the cops with her cell phone, b-but then they didn't believe me when I told them what she did..."

'Because you're a Cornish,' it was the unfortunate truth; her and her father's dealings had resulted in a black mark on their name. She cursed herself for maintaining the stereotype. 'Fucking things up again, aren't you Delle?'

"Fuck them. Fuck all of them," she kissed his hair with fierce force, loyal and loving. When she pulled away she took his hand, beginning to lead him to Negan's truck. "Let's get you home; don't worry about class for the next few days, kiddo. You need some time to rest."

As he crawled into the middle seat, exhausted and emotionally spent, he was thankful for his big sister, for all the fighting she'd done for him. He was thankful for his coach, understanding and helpful as he drove the young siblings home.

It wasn't until the next morning that he wondered why Delle was with Negan in the first place.

Chapter End Notes

Our poor baby Fang <3 broke my freakin' heart to write him hurting again; I swear I don't intentionally make him the brunt of all the awful on purpose.

If you like my writing, leave me a comment :) your words help me write faster and keep up with daily posts ! Love you guys ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 47

Chapter Notes

Negan can't stop digging this hole.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Dwight and Sherry were tucked away in the cells of Sanctuary, dirty, hungry and awaiting their discipline. Delle hadn't seen them before they were thrown in; she herself was on lock down, watched like a hawk by Fat Joey. Simon had been sent back to his outpost as soon as the guilty pair had been found; she was certain Negan wanted to put as much distance between the two as he could, without putting Simon six feet under. He, at least, was useful.

It was late; moonlight sprayed cold blue light through her tiny window, both knees bouncing anxiously as she sat on the edge of her bed. She hadn't seen Negan since they'd arrived back at Sanctuary, and he had barely said anything to her on their ride back. The last words he'd spat at her were 'You went and done it now'. She didn't know exactly what was coming at her, but she knew she would have to brace for impact. The Negan she'd known wasn't in control at the moment; and the one who was had penalties planned.

'Let your temper get away from you again,' she was reprimanding herself for the hundredth time, half in anticipation for what Negan would dole out. 'Not enough just to tell him no; no, you have to go fuck his best friend.'

Her face fell into her hands again; she knew she'd fucked up beyond recognition. She hadn't picked him simply because of his position. There was a discernable attraction with Simon, a shared pain; and he did things to her she had never expected to like, but did. His rage concentrated into pleasure, pain inflicted through the lens of intimacy and attentiveness, and the obliging, sweet man he'd become afterward; the sensations were new and addictive. It had felt so good to let go; let someone take the reins for once, feel pain disassociated from death. She didn't think she'd find someone she could trust in such a capacity, much less her ex lover's lieutenant at the end of the world.

'He's the one who broke your trust in the first place,' again her demons were always in favor of what fed them most; and Simon was an utter feast. If it meant betraying one of their favorite sins - Negan - they had no qualms in doing so. 'He has no right to expect you to spread your legs for him and that ridiculous bat - which he didn't even name after you - Simon's the one who wants you now, not who you were then!'

Was she really all that different than who she was six years ago? True, somewhere in the middle of that judgement day had hit, the dead rose and aspects of her hardened, others shut away for a time of safety - if ever such a time came - but who had invaded her dreams almost every night? Who could her subconscious not let go of no matter where she ran? And who had managed to stay alive in the Hell they called earth, only to find one another again?

Coincidence always had its way of looking like destiny; even if it was.

She glanced at her door, knowing there was zero chance of sneaking her way out. She had been
avoiding her thoughts on what Negan would do with her; he was already righteously livid over her acts with Simon, and the timing of Tina and company's escape merely stoked the flames of her personal pyre. 'Why'd she have to go ruin things? She'd still be alive if she...'? She couldn't even think about it; Negan had instructed his men to tell her how her friend had died, impaled on glass and ripped apart. It was a terrible way to go, but her death only fueled further resentment and feelings of betrayal. 'What's going to happen to me now?' Sleep finally wrapped it's lazy tendrils around her mind some time later, images of Negan in Simon's position taking over her dreams; only this time he choked til she wasn't moving.

"Up and at 'em early bird!" A hard shove of her bed frame along with the command jolted her awake; Negan stood at the foot, his boot against the post now off kilter from its place. She glanced to her door and then back up to him, his face strangely neutral.

"I-I thought the door was locked." She mumbled, pushing herself up in bed. Slick with nervous sweat she’d opted for her elastic bra and panties to sleep in, something Negan noted as his eye dipped to her chest a moment. He loved her goods; but all he could see were her bruises and bites.

"You really think I don't have a way in to every goddamn room in my house?" He raised a thick brow with a look of derision. "Since when are you dumb as a sack of bricks?"

His words were harsh; but his heart was broken, after all. She chose not to protest as much as her mouth wanted her to. "Can I... what can I do for you?" It was all she could think of, hoping the act of submission might cool his anger. It did not.

The mattress compressed under his weight as he sat on its edge, prompting her to tug her knees to her chest. Her heart raced within her ribs but she did all she could to appear collected. "Figured we're due for a chat." He explained, his dark eyes drilling into hers.

She swallowed non existent saliva. "Okay."

With a sigh he let his body turn to hers; Lucille sat across his lap, acting as a barrier between the two. "Well, first off - did you know about your pals' little escape plan?" He tapped his fingers against the bat's handle impatiently, trying to keep himself from getting physical in any way.

"I had no idea," she swore to him, letting her legs relax a little before her; god she hoped he saw the truth. "If I had I would've told you or stopped them -- I promise." His gaze was unchanging, his mouth a tight line as he studied her face. One he loved so much once, one he could read like a book; did he still have that power, or was she spinning him lies? Nobody knew about their deal; at least that's what he thought. To his empire, Tina, Dwight and Sherry had decided to run all on their own, Delle completely uninvolved; though a chunk of him wished she was, if only to have an excuse to punish her.

He had run hot ever since the world had ended and he'd lost everything; but Delle's antics had set him on a warpath, heading straight for her. His old self hated how he felt; the evil in him wanted her humiliated, broken into nothing, ripped apart, just like she'd done to him. The man he used to be couldn't handle the idea of hurting her; so the man he'd become was dealing with her. He wasn't certain if he'd be able to hold back if he got carried away; nor was he sure she didn't deserve the worst he had to offer.

"N-Negan?" Her fingertips brushed his knee and the slight touch practically burned; those hands were dirty, but he still itched for any friction between them. 'Remember what she did.'
"Keep your paws off, Delle," he was stern and twitching in his jaw, leather flexing around his barely contained body. She shot back, waiting obediently.

'At least she's listening now.'

'Not when it matters.'

"Alright, you little shit," the use of her pet name made her relax; if only a miniscule amount. "You didn't know. I'm taking you at your word here; so if I find out you're pullin' one over on me, you will not like what happens." He dipped his head as she nodded vigorously, her hands clasped tight in her lap.

"Thank you, Negan; I mean it, it's the truth." She breathed, her shoulders beginning to release their tension; it was an unlasting feeling.

"Now," he drew himself up as much as he could while still seated. "About you whoring around."

'Don't you fucking give me that mister five wives, fuck your misogynistic ass with sandpaper--!" She shut down her first response, trying to find the right words in the situation. "I'm... I wasn't whoring around, Negan." She said softly, her brows up turning as she spoke.

"Seems an awful fucking lot like you were, doll," there was a brash rage in his tone now; she could see him holding himself in. "What's your count at? Was Simon your first or just the most recent man of mine to stretch that cunt?" Even he was surprised at the ice in his words.

Her mouth ran off this time. "Hey!" She raised her shoulders defensively. "I am not some hole for your twisted little troops to fuck!" She balled her fists, teeth clenching in an effort to keep her mouth shut; but she failed. "Just because I'm not hopping on your johnson doesn't mean I'm spreading for whoever wanders past my goddamn door!"

"Could've fooled me," he growled, moving to stand, his height and width all encompassing like a storm overhead. "What makes you think you have the right to pull that shit in my own backyard? You waltz in here thinkin' you're immune, exempt from my fucking rules? You are wrong as hell!"

'I said I'd follow your rules but this is my fucking body! I'll use it for your orders but what I do with it on my own fucking time is my business!" She hopped to her feet, steadying herself on her mattress; it wasn't often she was taller than him, but she needed some kind of upper hand. "Why did you think I'd want to be with you again? Did you think you just deserved me because you happen to have a goddamn militia at your back? Huh?" With a grunt she shoved her hands into his shoulders; and immediately regretted it.

He threw Lucille aside, his hands grasping her arms and slamming her into a wall; it knocked the wind from her, her mouth gaping and body filling with terror. The new Negan was in total control. "Follow my fucking rules; bullshit, Delle!" He roared into her face, unbridled rage flying free as his fingers dug into her flesh. "You've been bending every fucking rule for yourself since the day you got here; and now you up and blew this one to pieces! You think you're gettin' off scott fucking free!?" 'PUT HER DOWN YOU DUMBASS!' Somewhere inside the part of him that loved her was pleading for leniency, begging for her safety; but the version holding her pinned wasn't listening.

"Let go of me! You're hurting me!" She kicked her legs out, but every blow she landed seemed ineffective.
"You're goin' to learn some fucking manners, you little shit," he was almost nose to nose with her, could see the glassy wetness coating her eyes; she was terrified. "Now that your half baked little scheme to get me off your tail has crumbled all to shit, seems I'm short a new wife!"

'Oh no, not this again!' "I'm not going to be another fucking wife for you!" She screamed back with all the strength she had; hoping his feelings on rape were still the same.

"Thought you might be on the fence," he chuckled with no humor, his tongue catching in his teeth. "So how's this for a little incentive? You fall in fucking line, wear the little black dress, and I don't kill your thieving friends?"

'He wouldn't...' her eyes were wide as saucers, shaking with dread and anger. "They deserve punishment, not death!" She reasoned, tears finally spilling.

"You're absolutely right!" He agreed, hands loosening up. "But you... whoo boy, Delle, the way I feel right now? It is takin' every ounce of my willpower not to tear you the fuck apart," his hand grabbed her ponytail, giving it a mean yank and extracting a yelp. "So how about it, Delle? You gonna let them die? You'd rather let those so-called friends of yours take your punishment than be with me?"

Then Delle did something he didn't expect; something unlike anything he knew of her in all their years.

Delle looked away.

She couldn't meet his eyes, couldn't admit that the man she'd loved was inspiring such horror in her. How had she come to this point? Why had she been allowed to live so long, to be in such a terrible place, with him? Why did it have to be him?

"...just kill me." She breathed, tears flooding from hollow eyes; her flames rarely ever died out, but in this moment they were all but gone.

He could barely believe it - had he backed her so far into a corner that she really saw this as her only choice? Was choosing a life with him really that unbearable - or would she simply die rather than share him again? The room was filled with questions on both sides, all of which would go unanswered. He mustered his grit; he needed his new self more than ever.

"Tell you what, sweetheart," he murmured, his hands moving to her waist. "Give me some sugar and maybe I'll take pity on you... might not even stick you out in the dead yard." 'Like you could ever do that,' his conscience cut him deep. 'You could never see her dead.'

Her eyes found his again, the glimmer of a spark attempting to light within them. She ran her tongue over her lips; she knew the likelihood of him following through wasn't good. If the kiss was disappointing he'd have his reason to say no, go on his merry way; if it was too good he'd have an excuse not to kill her. But if this was about to be her last kiss, she was going to make it count. She wanted to remember this one.

She raised herself on her toes, lashes falling shut as her lips met his; his shoulders tensed for a moment, still uncertain of her touch, but as she let her tongue taste his lip he eased, one hand threading through her hair to keep her still. 'Keep her with you as long as you can.' His mouth opened and they met in the middle, earning the nostalgic tastes each held for the other; he thought he
might've felt her moan as her fingers grasped his collar, keeping herself steady with his body. It was a knee-weakening kiss, the stuff crooning love songs are wrote about; a return to a different time. Certainly not simpler, but complicated in different ways. It was a kiss that could make someone forget; that made the world around them evaporate into nothing until they were alone, safe with each other, where the parameters of their realities couldn't keep them away. These were the types of kisses that kept Delle and Negan crawling back to each other, years ago; the magic sort of touch that only worked for this pair. He pressed into her, craving more of her warmth, hands cupping her wet cheeks as her fingers found his hair, tousling it from its perfect, combed coif; her teeth dragged against his tongue, a soft suckle ordering a deep snarl in his chest. 'More...’ He demanded inwardly, unwilling to break from her, loath to let her go; but let her go he did as she pulled back, taking a long, deep and shaking breath.

The air between them was thick; unspoken feelings, years of heartbreak, and shared carnal urges pulsing through them as they gasped for air. All Negan wanted was to return to her mouth, touch her in every way he used to, make her unravel in the best of ways; the idea of punishment had all but left his head. That is, until she spoke.

"Was that good enough?" Her words were barely a whisper, her fire burning low and cold inside. "Have I earned my death, boss?"

And just like that his walls flew back up; the old Negan bricked away, leaving the cruel, cold warlord to settle his dealings with her. 'It meant nothing to her.' "Y'know..." he mused, letting go of her and retrieving his trusty Lucille. "I think I'll let you live. Besides," he snickered at some unknown to her information. "I've got better offers on the table."

Before he left he dipped into her chest of drawers, where he knew she hid Fang now; as his fingers wrapped around the hilt she lunged forward, her flames roaring.

"Negan please - don't take him!" She pleaded, trying to reach for the blade; but Negan's height and raised arm kept him from her. "Please, I'll be good, don't take him away from me!"

"You've made that promise before, Delle," he growled through a stuck on grin, no joy in his teeth. "You might see Fang again if you learn to behave. Good girls get to keep their shit," he sneered down at her, eyes practically black with malice. "Besides, can't have you slicing those pretty wrists open when I'm not lookin'."

He was gone. Fang was gone. She was alone. Her energy stolen and spent she collapsed into her floor, wailing; sobbing for the loss of her brother twice over, for the man who'd been all but banished for her actions, for the way her body and heart ached for Negan after just one kiss. The world was creeping back in and she was reminded of how merciless it truly was.

Negan tried to block her fading weeping from his ears as he made his way down to the cells; he had a new wife to induct, chorus of howling or not.

Chapter End Notes

Angst angst angst!

Delle's in her lowest place rn; can she come bck from it?
Leave me a comment if you like my stuff; I love to hear from each of you, it really helps to keep me goin each day! ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 48

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Before...

Eric Cornish didn't attend school for two days after the night at the station; Negan knew better than to intrude on their time together. Whatever the girl had done, it had a major effect on his champion, and all the inspiring pep talks in the world wouldn't hold a candle to his sister's compassion. As much as he wished he could call her or text her - not that he could, the line was still dead - he wouldn't step on their toes; Delle knew best in this instance.

She'd spent those two days nursing him as best she could; before leaving them be, Negan had leant her his phone to leave a message with Salder's explaining her absence. She knew Barnes would be more understanding, hoped that he wouldn't mind her missing a day or two. She needed to help her family. She'd treated his cuts and scrapes as soon as they'd arrived home, bandaging him up and thanking herself for saving some of the gauze from his last injury. She knew better than to press the subject right away, cleaning out the scrapes in silence, hugging him close whenever it seemed he couldn't hold back anymore. It took all of her strength not to hunt down Holly and rip her apart; but her brother needed her now, so she focused on that.

He didn't leave his room the first day or so, just spent it balled up in his sheets; she made him food and stayed close, and though he couldn't muster the will to eat, he surrendered to a sip of water now and then, if just to ease Delle's nerves. Wrapped up in thoughts of what he'd done wrong, in what he'd tell his friends and what Holly would tell hers, he knew Delle had already found a way to blame herself for what happened. He tried to smile, let her know that she was helping; he hoped she could see it. All the while that question quibbled at the back of his mind. 'What was she doing with Negan?'

By the second day he was eating; she counted that as a win. Curled up on their sofa he spooned soup into his mouth, staring into their old television set, humming with the sound of some rerun comedy; he wasn't paying much attention. Delle stayed nearby but not right on top of him; space seemed necessary and he would call if he needed her.

She hated feeling a need herself; she was wishing she could get in touch with Negan. She wasn't about to betray her brother's trust, and she wouldn't tell him what had happened, but she wanted him in proximity, wanted his touch; she blamed it on the fact that he hadn't actually fucked her the days before, that she felt unfinished. Her heart knew better.

"Delle?" She was almost shocked to hear her name from her brother's mouth, but nonetheless was at his side in a flash.

"What's up, champ? Can I get you anything?" She was careful not to touch him at first, not until he made contact. She didn't want him frightened.

"N-no, I'm good, I just..." he didn't know what to say. He wanted to thank her for coming for him, for staying with him as much as she could; but his greater need was to ask about Negan. Their relationship made no sense; in her younger years she'd always made it sound like they hated each
other. But now? If he didn't know better... 'No! Delle would never do that! She knows he's married.' He looked to her, reaching out for her hand, reconciling himself to that he couldn't ask her. Not with all she'd done for him. "I just... thanks for keepin' an eye on me."

She merely smiled, giving his fingers a squeeze. Anything to keep him safe.

The third day he gathered himself, returning to school. He promised her over and over again that he would be alright; keep his head down, and should anything happen he'd summon her lickety split. Still not completely convinced, Delle had no choice but allow him to go; she couldn't afford to take any more time off, which meant Delle returning to work. Trudging in her stark white jumpsuit, Jordan was waiting at the door to his office - a path unavoidable to get to her workstation - a haughty expression on his features.

"Well lo and behold, the prodigal daughter returns!" He threw his hands up, his crisp button down straining around his belly. "Was beginning to think you'd skipped town!"

'I should be so lucky.' She groaned in her mind, pausing at his office. "I left a voice mail," she murmured, trying to appear penitent despite her hateful glare. "I know I had a few personal days saved up... and I needed some personal time." Jordy fucking Pullman wasn't about to hear what happen; he had no right to her private life.

"Really left us in the lurch," he continued, uncaring of her perfectly reasonable excuse. "If you're going to go off and play hooky, could give us more than a heads up the morning of."

"I wasn't playing at anything!" Uh oh; her blood was beginning to heat under her skin. "There was an emergency, it couldn't be avoided. I'll be sure to see into the future next time." That tone was just too much snark for his liking. "Watch your damn tone, Cornish. One word from me to the higher ups and you're out on that plump little ass of yours."

Her face twitched with anger, but she forced it down. 'Do this for Fang.' "...fine. I'm sorry I didn't give you more time to cover my shifts. May I get clocked in now?"

He grimaced before falling into a slimy sneer, stretching an arm out to the remainder of her walk. "Get to work then. Shouldn't be lazing around out here anyway."

Teeth grinding and fists clenching, she continued on her way; she needed the money and didn't have the luxury of skipping town. As much as she wanted to.

________________________________

Fang wondered what he was doing.

A part of him wanted to turn and run, leave things be; what he didn't know didn't hurt him. He wanted to believe he could go on blissfully ignorant; but the question that had hovered over his head like a storm cloud for days was screaming in his mind now, demanding an answer.

So there he stood, shifting from foot to foot, staring at his coach's office door. School had ended hours prior, and with no current sport to practice for, no one else was around. He swallowed hard, trying to conjure up the bravery to knock, his knuckles now on their third minute of being poised to do so.
Before he could consider the worst, he found himself knocking; a quick rap gave way to Negan's gruff tone beckoning him in from the other side. Fang hadn't even been sure he'd be there. He engaged the doorknob; god he hoped he was wrong.

"H-Hi Coach." He greeted sheepishly, letting the door swing free. He found him at his desk, reviewing plays for the spring, as he often did to pass through winter. His head shot up when he heard the boy's voice, standing on ceremony.

"Hey Fang," he sounded jovial, almost carefree; he wasn't sure how he should be acting, what he should expect. "Good to see you, champ."

The boy returned a smile, but didn't enter any further than to shut the door behind him. He was tense, as anyone would be after their first run in with police; but it seemed as though there was something else on his mind.

Negan cleared his throat, catching his star player's attention. "How're you feelin'? Those cops didn't rough you up too bad, eh? 'Something is wrong, here.' His conscience was nervous to say the least.

"I'm doing better, thanks," he shoved his hands into his pockets, something to do with his nervous energy. "Delle made sure I was alright... think I needed the days, though." That was extremely true.

Negan smiled; hopefully not enough to divulge the extent of his feelings. "She's a good egg, that one," he declared, thumbing through his plays absentmindedly, attempting to look busy. "Don't know why she never was in class." Talking about her time as his student might have afforded him some doubt from the young man.

"She's..." he felt awkward talking about his sister like this; what was okay to share? "She's had to be the toughest person in a room for a long time. Think at some point it just got to be easier to be that tough in front of everyone."

'Tough is right,' Negan thought to the handful of times she'd let her walls come down in his presence; with this new information from her brother, those moments felt deeper, somehow more romantic. 'I wonder if they'll ever fall completely.' "Well, none of my business there," a chuckle and a shrug to appear cool, collected. "But I'm sure she has her reasons."

"Yeah..." the boy's voice trailed. 'Oh fuck.'

"So... can I help ya with somethin', Fang? Don't worry, you didn't miss any homework." He joked, but Fang was on a mission.

"Well um... I wanted to talk to you about Delle."

' Fucking shit.'

"What about her?" He leaned into his desk, arms folding across his chest. "If she's lookin' for a character reference for college or some shit, I don't know how complimentary I'd be."
"It's not that..." he set his shoulders back, head held high; he was ready to defend his sister's honor if he had to. "That night you guys came and got me from the station..."

"Yeah?"

"...why was she with you?"

Negan blinked; he had a feeling the kid suspected something, but he wasn't expecting him to come right out and ask. *The boy's got more balls than I thought.* "I was drivin' home; saw her freakin' out on the sidewalk. Sister of my star athlete, not just gonna ignore the girl," he shrugged and tossed a casual grin his way. "Glad I did, too; she was gettin' ready to stomp herself all the way there."

*That seems... understandable.* 'Fang decided in his head, eying his mentor; but he didn't feel sated. There was something else, something that shouldn't be, there. "Coach... is there..."

'Go on, Fang, say it,' Negan couldn't tell if it was his morals or demons goading the boy in his head. 'Ask and see what a talented liar I am.'

"Is there something going on between you and my sister?"

He tried to look shocked; but a part of him had been waiting for someone to grow suspicious. The kid didn't want it to be true, he could see it in him; and he wasn't letting anything take Delle away from him, not for a second.

"Fang," he snorted, brows raising. "What kind of question is that? I'm a married man!" He hadn't said that of himself in ages; maybe three months or so? Deep pangs of guilt struck his heart; but not for Lucille.

"I-I know," Fang ran a hand through his hair, careful not to mess with his bandages. "I know -- it's crazy, completely crazy! I just... sometimes, when she looks at you, I wonder..."

'How the fuck is she looking at me?' His ears perked at the idea of her stealing glances while his back was turned, checking him out; not that he could blame her for sneaking peeks.

"And then after that away game, and last night..." the boy hadn't bought his sister's drunken hook up story after all; she needed to get better at spinning her tales. Negan sighed and pressed his thumb and forefinger to the bridge of his nose, rising from his desk.

"Look," he began, trying to sound exasperated. "Lots - and I do mean lots - of girls develop little crushes on me when they're in my class. Get a little hot for teacher, all that crap," he felt a twinge in his loins at the idea of Delle calling him Coach with her legs around his waist; a thought for another time. "Your sister is a beautiful young lady, but as I said, I'm spoken for!" He gave a shrug and tossed his hands up. *Please buy that!*

"I..." he wanted to believe his teacher, his idol, he really did; but as his eyes fell to his left hand his distrust only grew. "You... you don't wear a ring."

'Fuck my fucking life.' He glanced to his bare left hand; he'd not worn it in so long, the thin tan line that marked it's absence had vanished. *Where did I leave it?*

"Lost it," he smiled; but his cheeks were tighter, the muscles in his neck taut. "Been meaning to have it replaced. The ol' ball n' chain really gave me an earful for that one!" *Like she even cares anymore.*
"Haven't seen it on in months," Fang realized aloud, eyes growing wide before narrowing. "The replacement must be hard to make."

Negan's face remained a mask of calm, though his eyes had hardened in response to the questions. "Tricky design." He replied, arms crossing over his chest again.

Fang stared at him; wishing he could let sleeping dogs lie. His sister deserved her privacy, but fooling around with a married man? Much less her ex teacher? It was asking for trouble, trouble she didn't need. "...okay Coach," he sighed; Negan's body relaxed a moment before his student's brow furrowed, his warm eyes suddenly hard and determined. "I just... she doesn't deserve to get hurt. She bends over backwards to make sure we have a life... she doesn't need any heartache."

He knew what the boy was saying; knew what he was dancing around. 'Just say it, Fang; don't fuck your sister,' his demons whined. 'She picked me, kid.' 'I'll keep that in mind; should it ever apply to me.' He saluted the boy with two fingers, his lips pursed.

"...I'll see you around, Coach." Fang swallowed, his nerves spent, and took his leave. They both say nothing is happening... 'He thought to himself as he ascended the stair to the main building of the school. Or is that just the story they picked out?"

Negan slid down into his desk chair, cradling his head in his hand while the other opened his lowest drawer; a little digging found his quarry, the scrap of black lace Delle had left behind on her first visit. He traced the delicate patterns with the pad of his thumb, the stitches almost memorized in his mind; he ached for the flesh they'd once contained. Her brother's threats had an opposing effect; being told he shouldn't want her, couldn't have her only fueled his hunger.

'She's mine,' He decided, balling up the discarded panties in his fist. Nobody's gonna stop me loving her.

Chapter End Notes

Fang is a bright boy; see? He's doing better!!

Get ready for an angsty few days guys; it's gonna get dark up in here.

Leave me a comment if you like what I write! It really helps me keep goin during these darker chapters ♡♡♡♡
Delle hardly found the strength to leave her room when she was finally freed from constant watch. She'd never felt lower; her body didn't feel like her own, just wandering through Sanctuary like a ghost. She hadn't seen Negan since he'd left her, taking Fang with him; he wasn't who she thought he was anymore, and if any of the man she'd once loved was in there, she doubted she'd see him again. She'd been stuck with overnight watches again, the nights feeling colder than ever; but she needed the time alone. It gave her hours upon hours to think. Wonder. Hope. And tear it all down once the sun rose, every morning. It became clockwork, handing over the regularly unused AR-15 to whatever body came to take over for her; she rarely registered who it was.

Until the face that met hers was wanting her dead.

That morning came and went just the same, the sun rising over the compound, bringing little to no heat with it. She was exhausted after an eventless night, not a peep from the surrounding areas. Who would dare to cross the Sanctuary anyway? She heard the distinctive sound of boots stamping up the iron ladder to her perch as she readied to leave, crawl into bed and maybe wake in time for a bite of dinner. She yawned wide and waddled over to the ladder; her hand clapping over her mouth in horror when she focused on the man stood there.

It was Dwight; that much was clear. But he'd been horribly injured. A gauzy bandage was plastered over the left half of his face, the eye barely peering out from under it. The gauze was pinked with moisture, no doubt the wound was fresh; and the edges that the covering missed were red and mean. 'What the hell did Negan do!?'

"Oh god," she creaked, her hand trembling as it fell away. "Dwight..." His face told of a newfound hatred, unrestrained animosity. She could only stare - knowing very well it was likely the last thing he wanted - but he was haunting; a cautionary tale on legs.

"The gun, Delle." He grunted, holding out his arm and snaring it away. He shoved past her to take up his post; as if she wasn't even there.

"Dwight, what... what happened?" She wasn't about to leave without finding out the truth. He glanced to her, his expression inexplicably growing darker.

"You did," He growled, turning his attentions back to the surrounding forest as if it were the most interesting thing he'd ever seen. She gawked in response, blinking back furious tears. "This is all your doing."

'What did Negan tell him?' Was her immediate question. 'He wouldn't... no he wouldn't let our past slip. He's a dick not an idiot.' "What the hell are you on about?"
He turned to her now, seething. "Tina told us the truth," 'Fucking Tina!' "Sold her out to Negan just to get in his good books? You're scum."

'What the FUCK?' "That's a load of bullshit!" She could've been a bit more elegant with her words. "She was constantly passing out, you couldn't keep up with her fucking shots; I was trying to keep her alive!"

"By pushing her to be another one of his whores? She was terrified," His knuckles were white around the grip of his weapon, trying not to shoot her dead. "And now..."

She was losing everything; there was nothing left to cling to. "I'm... I never meant for this to happen. I liked her, I didn't want her to die... I'm sorry."

"That's not doin' anyone any good now." He had never sounded so cold; yet did. He was right, of course - the road to Hell was indeed paved with good intentions, and this was without a doubt her Hell. She balled up her fists, skin close to tearing on her ice cold knuckles. She felt stupid for ever thinking she'd found some peace, friendship, even love in the world they survived in; what was keeping her going now?

"Guess not..." she yielded, letting her chin dip in defeat. "Can I... do you know where Sherry is? I want to apologize... even if it's worthless."

Somehow he prickled further; the furrow in his brow was so tight it opened his wound, red seeping in with the pink gauze. "That's none of my business."

She threw him a puzzled expression; but her heart was already dreading the worst. "What the hell? She's your wife, you should know."

'Not that I know how husbands and wives function like normal fucking people.' She'd never seen a regular relationship in action.

"He didn't,' she already knew he did, but didn't want to believe it. 'Negan wouldn't do that, no,' it was all she had to keep from letting her tears fall, to finally leave the rooftop and retreat to her private sanctum. She prayed exhaustion would overtake her own heartbreak; though she didn't know who it was breaking for.

"Delle fucking Cornish!" Negan's voice somehow boomed in her ears despite being a figment of her mind. His distinctive boots appeared before her, materialized really, but as she went to raise her head she felt the hefty wood of Lucille on her scalp. A twist and her hair would fuse with that barbed wire forever.

"Fancy fuckin' seein' you here!"
The room roared with laughter, jeers thrown from every direction. She tried to open her mouth, defend herself, plead for mercy; only to find she had no mouth at all.

"This little shit here," this was the tyrant, through and through. There was no love in his tone, no comfort in his actions as he yanked her hair up, forcing her onto her haunches. "Has a real goddamn talent! Anyone want to guess what that is!?"

"She's a damn fine cocksucker!" It was Simon's voice that rang out behind his boss, a twisted grin under his mustache. 'And that pussy can make you see stars!"

"Damn right there!" Negan agreed; these imagined versions of the two men were thick as thieves and staring daggers at Delle. "But no, this little gift is goddamn inate! This girl..." he got down into her face, his totally unfeeling. It felt as though he stared right through her. "Fucking ruins anything she comes in contact with. She's a walkin' talkin' shit show," he stood back to his full height, steadying Lucille at the side of her head; she could almost hear the long dead woman's voice whispering in her ear. "You've ruined my life for the last time." He reared back, just long enough for her to shut her eyes and brace for impact...

Her eyes snapped open, breaths gulped down as if she'd just been drowning. Weeks had passed, and the same dream plagued her night after night. Sometimes he'd call her different names, sometimes her father would be standing with him instead of Simon, but every one ended with her on the wrong end of Lucille. Her slumbers fitful and disjointed, she was getting hardly any rest between her shifts and it showed; dark marks circled her eyes, new decoration as her bruises from that one torrid night with Simon faded. The nightmare never stopped, and every time she woke she found herself less and less frightened of that final, skull crushing moment. In a horrible way it became the one thing she looked forward to.

She barely ate; just enough to keep up with her guard duties, and generally just the mealy slop the kitchens regularly served to the workers. It was calories, and that's all she really needed. She was swirling her spoon in the greyish sludge, willing it to her lips for some unknown purpose.

She hadn't felt whole since the door had shut on Negan stealing Fang away that day; all she could see was her brother screaming and crying out as he was dragged from her all over again. She'd thought about trying to infiltrate Negan's private floor, steal him back, but she couldn't say for sure if he was even up there; and in honesty, she didn't have the spirit for it. Her flames had gone cold.

Her belly sated, she hauled herself from her seat, just in time to catch Negan tromping across the raised catwalk; she'd glimpsed him here and there since that fateful exchange, but she didn't dare speak a word to him since. She didn't think she could. She knew what he'd done; forced Sherry into the role of wife with the promise not to kill her real husband, but melted a chunk of Dwight's face just for good measure. Sherry, she hadn't seen at all; what could she possibly say? If she'd found it in her to don the black and submit to him, maybe neither of them would be in such dire straits; or they might've both been dead. She couldn't guess; not with this new version of her former lover. He acted like him, sounded like him, those dimples still inspired a tingle at the worst times; but the man inside felt nothing like the one she'd known. She despised herself for still feeling anything towards him. 'One more thing to hate.'

She slipped away before he could launch into one of his self-important tirades, nothing she hadn't heard before; but his voice felt like a knife twisting in her heart, so when she could run, she did. She paced the halls of his empire like the undead, hardly noticing those who passed her; there was no
But when she heard the foreign, absurd rhythm of high heels clacking against the polished stone floors and realized what part of the compound she'd wandered into, her blood ran like ice in her veins.

'Please no,' her thoughts begged and pleaded, but she knew what was in store before she even rounded the corner. 'I can't take much more of this...' But she was already looking up at the latest wife.

Sherry looked... clean. That was one of the biggest, noticeable features of Negan's wives; their hygiene was unparalleled. Her hair was combed pin straight, her lovely face accentuated with hints of makeup; and of course, she wore the signature uniform of a black dress and heels. It was the look in her eyes though, that stuck with Delle; they were malicious, vile. All she wanted was to see her dead.

'That makes two of us, Sherry.'

"You," she hissed through a tightly clenched jaw. Delle could see her neatly manicured fingers twisting into fists at her sides. "You shouldn't be up here."

'Seems she's lost some of her fight too.' She noticed, dipping her head. "Sorry," she mumbled, giving a shrug. "Was just meandering around, didn't notice what floor I was on," the wives - she only knew Sherry by name - lived on the same floor as Negan, though in more cramped surroundings. "Sorry to bother you, Sherry."

"Don't you dare say my name," gone was the gentle woman who Delle had come to know; she wondered if that piece had died with her sister. "You're the reason I'm in this mess, you stupid slut."

The slur sparked something in her; she heard it over and over again in chorus with Negan saying the same. "I'm not a fucking slut," she growled, her shoulders rolling back and her stance widening; her words were getting away from her again, unfortunately. "I'm not the one who chose Negan over their husband." She hadn't meant it, but Sherry put all her intention in the slap that found her cheek.

"He would've killed him!" She cried, tears welling. "Maybe if you were capable of love you'd know what sacrifice looks like!"

"Don't you go telling me what I'm capable of," Delle's skin was on fire, angry and insulted. "You don't want to find out."

"You can't do shit!" Delle was very close to striking back as Sherry retorted. "You're a coward; I know he asked you to marry him, little unattached single Delle. And yet you still said no! My life is ruined because of you!"

"I begged him to kill me!" The statement brought a brief look of shock to the new wife's face, though it vanished quickly. "I told him to take me instead; let me pay for your stupid mistakes and call it square. He didn't accept."

Sherry only regarded her coldly, her mouth twitching from its thin line. "So you're a whore and a filthy liar," she muttered, teeth grinding so hard they might shatter. "It's funny, the things you learn about someone when it's too late."
Delle's vision turned red; before she knew it her shrieks filled the hallway and she had Sherry on the ground, straddling her waist as she tugged at her hair, scratching her bare arms. It was on instinct more than anything else; she felt like an animal, savaging its rival. 'Rival in what?'

"Whoo boy, we got ourselves a cat fight!" She froze on top of the terrified woman, Negan's voice dripping down her spine like freezing water. She could hear him coming up behind them, yet she didn't budge. "Somebody's got their claws out today!" Sherry wriggled herself free, gasping against the wall, utterly petrified while Delle listened to Negan's word. The speech pattern was definitely his Sanctuary self, cruel and corny; the version she couldn't bear to look at. "Upsy daisy, Delle."

'Follow his word,' her words repeated in her brain as she stood, eyes glued to the ground. 'Obey his rule.' "Sorry, boss," she whispered, again not meeting his eye as he rounded on her. "Don't know what came over me."

"No fucking shit!" He threw his body back in a laugh, stomping a booted foot. "What's the matter, sweetheart? You jealous Sherry here gets to wear the dress?" She felt his breath against her ear and hid a shiver. "Can fix that for you; more than enough of me to go around."

She felt bile bubble in her throat and swallowed it down. She'd shared him once, stolen him really; the prospect of being one of six was stomach churning. "Just stress," she replied. "May I return to my room? I have night guard duty and need to get ready."

She was about to turn when Negan caught her by the collar. "Not so fast!" He purred with evil intention. "Now I don't want any bad blood between you two lovely ladies," he reached out his free hand to Sherry, who took it obediently. 'Already well trained.' "So nobody goes fuckin' anywhere til you two kiss and make up."

Delle looked at him incredulously while Sherry just licked her lips. In her weeks as a wife she must've learned quickly to listen and obey. Negan simply raised his brows, giving his head a tilt. "I'm waiting," he said in the most impatient tone. "Change of guard is comin' up fast, little Delle; wouldn't want you punished for bein' late."

Her face scrunched in pure fury, turning to the woman before her. At her short stature Sherry was already leaning in, her lips barely puckered and quivering. Delle tried to resist any movement aside from pouting her own mouth, preparing to kiss; but as their lips collided something in her snapped.

Sherry pulled back quick with a yelp, her bottom lip swelling and cut; Delle was wide eyed, shocked to find the taste of blood in her mouth and coating her lips. 'Did I just fucking bite her!?'

"Hot damn!" Negan clapped his hands together; normally he'd crush anyone who'd dare harm his property, but Delle, as ever, was the exception to the rule. "Got into that kinky shit didn't you Delle? That's hot as hell," again he got in her face, so close she had no choice but to look him in the eye. "Maybe I should've tried a little harder. You'd make a fine little wife."

She spun on her heel and ran back the way she'd come, leaving Negan with a ghost of the expression he'd elicited. He could see them; the cracks in her strength, how her soul was splintering inside her. She was so close to being broken. But having seen the look on her, it had been detestable to him; somehow worse than Simon's bruising.

'Shit,' He thought to himself, hardly hearing Sherry's heels carting back to the wives' quarters. 'I overdid it, didn't I?'
His conscience, which had all but given up on reasoning with its owner, piped up with righteous indignation.

'Ya think?'

Chapter End Notes

Hey guys! Bit of a time jump here; I want to say it's been at least 6 weeks between the initial confrontation and the end of this chapter. It's really just to catch up with the seasons proper.

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment :) they help me stay focused and remind me I'm writing for someone ♡♡♡♡
Negan was at his desk; maps for the surrounding areas splayed before him, ledgers and notebooks with collections of thoughts piled up to one side. He was meant to be organizing supply runs, seeing who was falling short, where to hunt next, but his mind was frenzied. He couldn't get those eyes out of his thoughts.

He'd seen her hurt before, he'd hurt her before. He knew what that looked like on her pretty face; this was not that. When she was hurt, the flames in her would blaze, as if licking and sealing whatever wound, emotional or otherwise, was stinging; they were part of her healing process, keeping her strong. When he'd looked into those bright eyes he'd seen nothing of the sort. They looked like shattered glass, the lively nature to them completely devoid.

'I thought I knew what she looked like broken,' He thought to himself, resting his forehead against his stacked fists. 'Goddamn was I off the mark. That was...' there they were again, clear as day, empty and cold for that split second before she turned, raven hair billowing away. 'That scared the shit out of me.'

He'd taken things too far; he was certain of it the first time he'd seen her after their meeting. It had been weeks ago, her dark mane slumped over one of the tables in the mess hall, body slack and unattentive to anything around her. That wasn't the Delle he knew. That wasn't the Delle he loved.

'You did that to her, you old bastard. Took a perfectly good woman and fucked her up.'

'Just like you did years ago.'

'Couldn't just leave her well enough alone, could you? She's not yours, never will be.'

His nose crinkled at the idea; there was a lie in that. She had always been his. Even with their sultry secrets years prior, even then when he couldn't go walking with her on his arm, she'd been his. When they'd fallen, it had been deep; all they wanted was each other, and he would've forsaken everything for her, had she ever asked.

'That's not the case anymore,' his demons were quick to speak, remind him of what had landed her in such hot water. 'She's got other interests now.'

It riled him up to think about it; her underneath his second-in-command, crying out for Simon instead of him. And the marks - every bruise and bite haunted him, a possessive reminder of who she'd chose. It struck him strange that most of his anger had directed towards Delle; Simon had disobeyed him as well, but on some level he understood his surrender to his urges. Negan had been in the same situation with the same woman, after all. No, he threw the blame on her, heartbroken that she would choose someone other than him; he didn't understand what kept her from him now. The chemistry
was still there, they were on fire together; the obstacles that had stood before them had crumbled or
died. He glanced to Lucille, leant up in an armchair; he wondered what she would make of all this.
Would she tell him off for going near her in the first place, want him to be happy? They were
questions he'd never have answered; ones he'd have to guess.

The old self wanted to forgive her; it wanted to apologize, admit to the needy idiot he was being,
even beg that she reconsider him as an option. The last wish was something of a long shot, but damn
if he didn't still love her. Again, he could only guess whether there was any love left in her for him...

A rapid banging at his door ceased his melancholy thoughts, the casual cockiness of his current
persona flying into place. The rest of Sanctuary didn't need to see the lovesick teenager she turned
him into.

"Well, get in here!" He barked from his seat; this time of night he was expecting a wife, though he
doubted he'd get any pounding in with how he felt. All the better when the door opened and he saw
Fat Joey tumbling into the room, red faced and panting. "Damn, Joseph! You run all the way here?
Tryin' to shed some curves?" He chuckled, though the expression on the young man's face told him
not to.

"N-Negan, sir," he stammered. "It's the girl, Delle--"

Negan's back went ramrod straight, all his cool carelessness leaving his expression. "What about
her?"

The nights were getting warmer, they'd had a short winter that year; but Delle didn't feel it. More she
couldn't; the pressure of the wind would hit her but she never registered the sensation of temperature,
could barely even smell the death in the air. She was almost totally numb; all she did was stare out of
her broken body and follow through with her daily tasks. Which is what lead her up to her rooftop
perch that day, a low level Savior named Howie making idle chatter as he prepared to leave for the
night.

The treeline was as mundane as it'd have ever been; the night beautifully clear, every star could be
seen for miles. It was a night that a person could fall in love; not that she could enjoy it. Everything
looked black; all of it threaded together in one dark image that encompassed her vision.

Except, that is, for the ground.

The ground looked inviting.

She'd come to realize if she wanted something done, she'd have to do it herself; even if that included
death. She had found herself thinking of that endless sea she'd floated through after the arrows had
let her bleed; the warmth, those familiar voices, even the honey brown eyes of a face that should've
hated her looked welcoming. She wanted to know if she could get back there, if it would look the
same after what she'd done since; she had to know. The Sanctuary had become anything but; she'd
learned since Fang how to live without love, but since her reunion with Negan, she found herself
craving it again. And now at his behest, there was nothing. In her eyes, there never would be again.

'Remove yourself,' a dark voice, one she didn't recognize beckoned her from the depths of her mind.
It intrigued her as much as it made her hair stand on end. 'Remove yourself from the equation; won't
everyone be happier? Won't things go back to the way they were before you showed up and threw a wrench into things?' The voice had grown more and more logical as her days stretched on. 'Don't you want to go back to that sea? Find peace?'

As she stared down to the barren earth below, it began to morph in her sight; it became that mysterious clouded sea, and it looked so incredibly tempting. 'Wouldn't take much,' that black voice cooed in her ear. 'Just close your eyes and take a step; take the pain out.'

She stood on the ledge; toes just skirting over the precipice. Howie was still muttering to himself, maybe to her, unwrapping his scarf from the weapon's strap.

"Nothin' crazy happened today, just a long watch." he stated, shrugging his shoulders.

'Do it, Delle. There's nothing for you here.'

She closed her eyes. Took a breath.

"Wonder if I can still snag some food before I turn in."

'Go on, you'll feel so much better.'

"I'm sorry Fang. I can't keep fighting." She croaked in a broken whisper.

She stuck one leg off the edge, the breeze swaying her limb.

"What? Who's F-- fucking shit!"

Negan's stomach was turning in rapid circles, throat dry and close to blowing chunks; the heavy bounce of his foot against his floor the only thing distracting from his need to heave out his innards. He'd demanded his men bring her straight to him, regardless of her state; he needed to see her, see what he'd done first hand. 'I deserve this.' He felt like an utter moron, using scare tactics to sway her will; and it'd backfired in the worst of ways. He couldn't imagine going on without her; so why had he been so terrible to her? Was one time with Simon really worth her loss?

There was a heavy knock at his door again; he stood from his place but did not move to open it, every muscle in his body tense and tightly wound. "Bring her in." He commanded, sounding less like the ruler of the Sanctuary and more like himself than he had in years. All he wanted was to see her.

"H-here they are, Negan." Fat Joey announced shyly. As he wobbled into his room he was joined by a young Savior who Negan hadn't learned the name of yet; between the two was Delle, held by her arms, tearful and furious eyes blinking up at Negan.

'She's alive,' His muscles relaxed - only slightly - to see her draw breath. 'Haven't lost her yet.'

Her hands were bound at her back, though she wasn't struggling; she didn't look to have the energy for it. He'd not noticed it before, but she looked completely drained; she'd always been pale, but was bordering on sallow, her eyes somehow brighter peering out from dark circles. Was she thinner?
"Untie her," he muttered, unable to pull his eyes from hers. "She's not goin' anywhere." The younger man was prepared, undoing her holdings; in the instance he'd restrained her with his scarf. It was what he had on hand.

Now freed, Delle's arms slacked at her sides; she teetered on her legs, remaining upright through the grace of the men propping her up. Her eyes were still unreadable; Negan thought he saw a spark but wasn't certain.

"Get out," he murmured, glancing between his two soldiers. "Need to talk to this one alone." The men exchanged a look but nodded, leaving Delle standing in untrusted legs before their leader. The pair were alone, a stiffness in the air between and surrounding them.

"You tried to jump off the roof," he said softly, matter-of-factly. She said nothing, silent and brooding; though it seemed more out of fatigue than stubbornness. "Thought careening off the edge of a building was better than here, huh?"

She said nothing, just watched him, blinking periodically.

"That was dumb as shit, Delle."

Nothing. Silence.

"Thinkin' you could go off yourself? Who the fuck is that gonna help?"

Nothing.

"I mean goddamn it Delle, if it was really that bad--"

"Negan."

Her voice was so beaten down, totally pitiful; she was rocking from side to side now, unable to support her own being. She pitched forward, Negan snapping into action and hoisting her upright. It was a sad, shocking truth of how much lighter she was in his arms. Their eyes met as her head dipped against his bicep, her will to keep awake almost used up. "I'm so tired."

His face twitched with a sadness, somewhere deep; a place he thought had left with her. The years of their complicated relationship had taken their toll, no question; but his most recent conduct had all but ruined her. He did what little he could do, what he doubted she'd remember in her weary daze, wrapping himself around her, holding as tightly as he could; as if to engulf her body with with his own, be as one so he'd never wonder for her safety again.

"I'm so tired." She repeated; she honestly couldn't remember if she'd said it already. She felt soft lips and rough scruff against her forehead, gazed up with bleary eyes at Negan's face; was that his hand on her cheek she felt? 'He's so warm...'

"Let's get you some shut eye, sweetheart," he spoke in a hoarse but comforting tone, slipping one arm under her knees, the other round her shoulders to whisk her body up, taking the few steps to the side of his own bed. He let her sit, still unsteady, as he knelt to unzip her jacket. He watched her face, waited for her to slap his hands away; but she didn't. She watched in turn as his familiar, well taught fingers slipped her jacket from her arms, discarded and forgotten. His hands were warm on her thighs, wide and firm with his thumbs running over her denim jeans. "Mind if we lose these, darlin'?"
'He's being so...’ She gave a slight nod, lying back to allow for easier removal; he made quick work of her boots, letting her keep her socks. He tried to push the memories of all the other times he'd unbuttoned her pants from his mind, loosing the fastening and digging his fingers into the waist, gliding them from her limbs in one fluid motion. '...civil.’

He pulled back his plush coverings, arranging her figure against his dark sheets; her eyes were already drowsy and by the time she nestled into a pillow she was out cold. He took a chance, daring to slip from his own jeans, ignoring the half raging excitement at his groin to crawl in next to her; his heart leaping as she curled against his chest, a hand instinctively gripping his shirt. He tugged the blanket over their bodies, knowing he'd be awake for hours, merely watching her sleep, his fear easing with every rise and fall of breast, every warm breath against his shoulder. He wasn't going anywhere. He needed to be there.

She didn't dream at all that night.

Chapter End Notes

A tentative peace; at least til she wakes up.

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Chapter 51

Chapter Notes

Delle bein' a badass!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Before...

Barnes was a blessing.

Unlike the corporate animal that was Salder's and the walking garbage chute that was Jordy Pullman, Delle was comfortable telling the owner of the small pub she called work most nights what had happened. He'd been incredibly understanding; running a bar for almost four decades, he'd seen his fair share of horrible actions fueled by alcohol, and the effect it had on its victims. While he ribbed her for not calling sooner, he was still forgiving. The man was a gift in Delle's otherwise perplexing reality.

Delle had never really fancied herself a talent in any facet, but she liked to think she was decent at slingling drinks. From the safety behind the bar, she could talk to people with anonymity and privacy for her own goings on; the time honored tradition of spilling one's guts to a bartender was well kept in her town. She learned secrets, lies and rumors; people grew so loose lipped at the mercy of liquor. Were she a more wicked person she might've used these moments of unfettered honesty for personal gains, but that had never been her style. She exercised her wickedness in other ways. Tall, dark haired and handsome ways.

It was a Thursday evening; not quite the weekend and the bar was populated accordingly. A few out of town folks who'd stopped for a drink before continuing their journey, a local or two who thankfully didn't know Delle in the slightest - her years spent reclusive and antisocial had set her up for a comfortable mysterious miasma that floated with her. One end of the bar, sat by herself and sniffing, was a newer patron; Delle had served her a few times. She rarely spoke, paid and tipped well, always ordered Moscow Mules; the cocktail, while not difficult, seemed out of palate for the town's simple tastes. Delle thought she might've just been another traveller, but now on her third week with twice as many visits, she figured she was new to town. She wasn't sure what had brought the unknown woman to the sleepy little burg, but whatever it was must've been upsetting.

She almost always ended her night in tears.

Delle had thought about asking her what was wrong - what had her sobbing into her glass every time she came in - but with how little the woman talked, she thought better of it and held off. If she wanted a sympathetic ear, she'd have one when she was ready.

"Delle--!" A voice sang out from the opposite end of the bar, followed by raucous, earsplitting laughter. Jordy and two old friends had infiltrated her little workspace that night. "Bar maid! Another round!"
Rolling her eyes and swallowing the cussing out of a lifetime she had ready for him, she trudged over to see what the annoying trio wanted. "What'd you want?" She said flatly, a grimace curling in her cheek.

"Wow! What kind of service is that!?!" There was nothing against Salder's policies in keeping a second job - Delle checked - but Jordy still talked to her the same way he did at their day job. "Try it with a smile, princess! Don't wanna bitch yourself out of a tip!" His friends - two other Timberwolf alumni who'd got the hell out of Dodge after high school - snickered at their apparent ringleader. Some things never changed.

"I don't know Jordy, an ass like that deserves 12% at least!" The one on his left chirped. "Can follow it up with twelve inches too."

'More like 2 inches, hard.' She thought to herself. "So just another round of suds?" She bypassed the jeers and catcalls; why did she bother with new fishnets again?

'Because you know how Negan likes them.'

She smiled to herself; thinking to earlier that very day, when the pair had squeezed in a brief tryst not long after a school ended. He'd pulled her into his lap, her ass grazing his steering wheel as flesh met flesh, his hands fiery hot on her hips as he guided her up and down his length. It was fast, dirty, steamy and incredibly satisfying; she found release quickly as a result of horrible, delicious things growled into her ear. His lips stuck to her skin, strong arms holding her flush to him as his load shot inside her, snarling out a gasp.

With a satisfied groan he'd held her there, fingers tracing the gridlock pattern of those stockings.

"These fishnets do the worst damn things to me, sweetheart."

She smiled to herself, away from the entitled pack of patrons, pouring out their drinks of choice; only the most commercialized, lackluster beer for these men. She sauntered the few steps from the taps to their stools, sliding their empty glasses from their grips in favor of their new ones.

"Enjoy, fellas." She tried to sound magnanimous, though on her tongue it always came off as sarcastic. 'Oh well.'

"Hey wait!" The third of their party piped up, making Delle's skin crawl; he'd grown more abashed with his staring as the night rolled on, looking at her like she was his next meal. Now he was licking his lips and Delle was forcing down a dry heave. "How uh... how much for a drink of that?" He gestured to her figure, a stupidly sly look on his features.

Her mouth fell open as her brows furrowed, hands clenching tight at her sides. "Are you asking me if I have a fuckin' price tag?"

"C'mon hot stuff," he muttered, his friends now egging him on. "Throwing that ass around in that sexy little get up; I'd make it good for you too." An ugly wink in her direction brought her anger to the boiling point.

"Okay asshole, so you've got two fucking choices here," she stormed up to the bar, eyes dark and wily. "You can apologize, finish your drink, leave this fucking bar and don't fucking come back, or I can take you outside --"
He and his friends giggled.

"And beat you into a bloody pulp of teeth and hair." Barnes kept a bat under the bar; more for show than use, but she produced it then. The way her face twitched with anger and her bright eyes sealed her words as a promise. Her proposer looked thrown off, not used to a worker talking out of turn.

"Y-you can't speak to me that way!" He mewled, sounding like a belligerent child.

"Oh I abso-fucking-lutely can!" She scoffed as she leaned over, as much as her height would allow. "I've got a bar full of folks who heard you harass me; so pardon me if I defend myself!" The man was turning pale, the spineless creature. "So are you gonna chug back your beer or do I get an introduction to the inside of your fucking skull?"

She'd never seen men drink so fast; muttering curses and expletives her way they forked out their share for their tab, as exact change as they could muster. Delle was fine with it - she knew better than to expect tips from men like them.

"See you later boys. Don't drink n' drive." She called with a scowl as they hightailed it from the pub, tossing the bat aside. She wasn't about to have their disorder in her tiny kingdom.

It was then she caught on to some of the softest laughter she'd ever heard, from an unexpected source. The mystery woman at the far end of the bar was smiling wistfully, clutching her half done Mule. She'd clearly noticed Delle's attention, ceasing.

"I'm sorry," there was a lilting quality to her speech, something sweet and kind. "You just... wish I had that kind of spirit at your age."

Delle smiled, though a little confused; she normally called herself aggressive. "Boys like that don't get the time of day from me," she slid down to the woman's vicinity, giving her the gentlest look she could manage. "Show a little backbone and they piss their pants running."

Again she earned a laugh, and a good look at her newest patron; she was on the older side, nearing 40 maybe? The years had creased in a few wrinkles here and there, but she had a beauty to her that age would never spoil. She had warm blond-brown hair, flecked with a strand or two of silver, a wide smile when she showed it, and warm, friendly honey brown eyes; even the tears couldn't hide those. She was likely a total knock out in her youth; if she wished it she could be again.

"Today's youth are in good hands with a girl like you running the show," The woman smiled. "I was always too timid in my younger years." That Moscow Mule had loosened her up.

"Never too late to get a little braver. Everybody's got some untapped pluck in them," she gave her shoulders a quick raise with her words; another giggle. She decided to make herself busy in her immediate area, wiping down the bar and exercising her curiosity. "You just move here? Feels like you're a new face."

"Well you're always welcome here," she was pleased with how cheerful she sounded. "At least with your order in I'm doin' more than tapping kegs and slinging shots."

Her smile was smaller this time, her hands still cradling her glass, fingertips catching condensation. "I
know it's not really anything fancy..."

"Oh no! It's actually refreshing to mix something properly. The next most complex cocktail I make is jack and cola." Barnes rarely shelled out for the name brand sodas.

"Well glad I could shake things up around here," her laugh this time was almost a sob. "I... guess I just missed the taste. I haven't really been drinking lately..." the woman's hand caught over her mouth to stifle a cry, those tears rolling down her cheeks again.

"Hey now," Delle reached for some bar napkins, the closest thing to tissues she had, handing them to the woman with her inexplicable crying. "I'm sorry about that, didn't mean to dredge up somethin' depressing by it."

The woman sniffled, drying her eyes on the less than soft napkins. "It's alright, just been going through alot recently..." she sniffled again; Delle doubted the tears were done.

"Don't go apologizing either; everybody cries over somethin'."

'Llike a married boyfriend, for instance.'

'He's not my boyfriend.'

'Right.'

The woman nodded, setting her hands on the bar before her. Whatever had her so upset was taking its toll; few people spent weeks at Delle's counter without any solace or solution.

"Is it somethin' you want to talk about?" She said softly, leaning her elbows against her side of the bar. "I've got a great ear for listening."

"I-its okay," the woman protested but it seemed as though she needed to talk. "You don't want to hear about gripes from an old lady like me..."

"Okay for one; you're far from old. If I look that good by the time I'm 30--"

"I'm 39."

"--you're shitting me, really? Goddamn. Well then I'd count myself twice as lucky," she grinned her widest, inspiring confidence. "And two; the bar's pretty quiet tonight, it's still early, and I don't have shit to do right now. I've got all the time in the world." She crossed one arm and used the other to cup her cheek in her hand, waiting for a story.

The woman looked apprehensive, but she needed to tell someone, anyone what was going on. "I'm... I recently tried and... failed at something I've really wanted for years. I've made so many attempts to to get the thing, and... I think this might've been my last chance."

'Wow. Descriptive.' Delle dismissed her demons rudeness, nodding patiently. "So this... thing that you want; what makes you think this was your last shot?"

"There's sort of a time limit. And well... after this many tries, you kind of have to take the hint that the universe doesn't want you to have a -- a thing."
She was incredibly adverse to naming what it was she wanted so badly, what was breaking her heart; but at least she was talking to someone about it. "I mean I do everything right; I'm healthy, I don't indulge myself too often, but every time... I get three months in, almost ready to tell someone and it just," her eyes welled up again. "Slips away."

'Ooh.'

'Time limit. Healthy. Three months. Slips away. '

'Ooh no.'

Delle reached over the bar, a supportive hand finding the woman's arm; there wasn't much to say in an instance like this one. The woman sobbed again, her hand clutching over Delle's. 'I'd need a stiff drink too, if it were me.'

"Was this um... was anyone else involved in getting the thing, or was this more of a solo operation?"

She nodded. "My... my husband. I didn't tell him I was... it's just I've got his hopes up countless times over the years, and when I can't hold on... I just couldn't see that look on his face again." She could just picture it; dark eyes trying to be strong, hiding disappointment, the anger of fate denying him again. She couldn't do it anymore.

"Well," Delle was in unfamiliar territory; how did normal married couples act? "I mean... it can always hurt, when we think we're disappointing the ones we love; but I think in the long run they'd be happier to know we don't suffer our sadness alone."

'Damn, that was poignant as hell!'

The woman managed a smile; she was far from alright, but this kind, feisty young barback was a soothing salve to her pain. "That's quite a way of thinking... you're very wise beyond your years, aren't you?"

This time Delle smiled, a knowing chuckle behind her lips. "Just seen alot of shit," she shrugged. Without missing a beat she grabbed a pair of shot glasses and the high end vodka from the liquor lineup, pouring one for her new friend and one for herself. "I know you like your cocktails, but I think we both need somethin' a little sharper right now."

"O-oh I couldn't," the woman chuckled, waving her hands. "I haven't done shots since I was a teenager."

"Well tonight you're a teenager," Delle laughed, raising her glass. With little reluctance the woman took hers, cheering it as well. "To suffering; and finding those to suffer with." The woman laughed away a tear as they swallowed their vodka, smooth fire down their throats; she coughed at the sensation but found herself happy to have done it nonetheless.

"Phew that stuff's got a kickback don't it?" Delle smiled, setting the empty shooters aside.

"I'll say," the woman laughed again; she seemed like someone who was made to laugh, someone built for happiness. "I'm... thank you for listening, dear. I didn't mean to talk your ear off, but you're quite the listener."

"I try." She gave a self confident grin.
The woman sighed and sipped her drink, cool on her warmed tongue. "You know I don't think I caught your name? With all this chattering I should at least know the name of such a nice girl."

She stuck her hand across the bar, leaning with her spare arm. "I'm Delle. Pleasure to meet you, Miss...?"

"Lucille."

Chapter End Notes

DUNN DUNN DUNNNNN

What do we think? I wanted to come up with a good excuse for Lucille's distance during the time in the past so far. (If you're not sure what it is I'm happy to tell you)

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! They keep me inspired and writing quicker!
The scent was what stirred her first. It was familiar, warm; masculine, with elements of soap and heat and blood. It smelled like home, wrapped in something different; her eyes still hadn't opened when she finally placed it, her nose pressed against its source.

'Negan.'

She opened her eyes reluctantly, taking in the full scope of her surroundings. These were his sheets, she remembered their texture, which meant it was his room. She peered up towards him, his face still and unusually calm in slumber, the chest her chin rested against rising with deep breaths. One of his arms was under her head, a fleshy pillow, while the other was draped over her side, hand caught sleepily on her back. Her mind not quite awake, she nuzzled, drawing in his scent, the natural heat his body emitted; until she began piecing together what had happened.

'Simon... punishment... he took Fang...'

Her eyes snapped wide as her head snapped back, finding his face again, this time with a modicum of fear. She couldn't quite recall the exact events that had brought her there, dreading what she might've done. With the arm she had free, she pawed at her torso, her hips; her top and panties were secure, her jeans missing. She gingerly did the same to him, tshirt and boxers in place but again, pantsless. She felt a little comfort, but wasn't certain yet; such thin layers had never stopped them before.

He shifted in his sleep and she held back a squeak, his arms pulling her flush to his body; she tried to ignore the maddening sensation of his hard length pressing into her hip. 'He's just dreaming,' she told herself. 'He knows better than to try and start shit.'

'Does he though?'

Shaking the idea from her mind, her gaze returned to his face; it was surprisingly peaceful, his lips parted softly for deep, slow gulps of air. His brows were relaxed, smooth; if his eyes were open he'd look totally care free, as if he didn't have a massive community to rule over. She wondered if he was dreaming, and if he was, where was he? Did he go back in time as she often did? Maybe new conquests with his army against the dead? Or was it her in his dreams right now...

His eyes flickered open, jolting when he saw her bright eyes wide awake and staring at him."Jesus, Delle," he muttered, running his hand across his face, wiping away the sleep. "How long you been starin' at me like that?"

She didn't answer. "How'd I get here?" She demanded; she hadn't moved but she needed answers nonetheless.

That once relaxed brow knit, his eyes narrowing. "You don't remember what happened?"

She looked at him in confusion, waiting for an explanation. "Would I be asking if I did?"
'At least she sounds like herself again.' His expression changed to one of sadness, begrudged responsibility. "You were exhausted," he started; there was a gruff softness there she knew he reserved for hard moments. "You went up to the roof for your night shift... then tried to jump."

With that it came rushing back; the wind up so high, her body dangling over the edge while the day shift Savior clung to her collar, desperately heaving her back to safety. She remembered her wrists being bound, being brought to Negan's room; images of his hands sliding off her jacket and shedding her of her jeans flashed across her memory.

"You undressed me." She jerked her head away from him, a little annoyed by the fact she didn't find herself that upset.

"I asked first," he muttered in earnest. "You were dead tired, wasn't about to fuck a girl in a coma."

'And now that I'm not? She thought to herself, wriggling out the far side of the bed, Negan unable to take his eyes from her backside as she searched for her pants. "Chivalrous aren't you?"

He propped himself on his elbows, watching as she found her jeans and redressed. "Where do you think you're goin' Delle." It was a statement, not a question. She turned, fly hanging loose at her pelvis as her hands found her hips.

"As charming as your company is, Negan, I just want to keep my head down and get back to work." 'I want Fang back but God knows that's not fuckin' happening.' Her mind added silently, her hip cocking on one side.

He hauled himself from his linens, seemingly uncaring of his still half hard cock in his boxers; she reminded herself not to look. "Yeah that's a big ass no to that one, you little shit," he crossed his arms, barely a few inches from her and glowering like a demon. "Way I see it we're due for another chat."

She dropped her shoulders, another bout of a different exhaustion coming on. "If you're just gonna call me a whore again could you maybe fucking not? I don't need to hear it."

He sighed; he had an uphill battle ahead of him, but he was the one who'd built up a mountain of ill will in the first place. "I won't call you a whore, cross my heart, darlin'." He made a show of doing just that, beckoning her to his sofa. She looked at him suspiciously but moved as per his direction, curling into one corner as he sat as close as he could without touching her.

"Have I not been doin' my job right or something?" Her arms crossed, pursing her lips to try and calm her nerves.

"No," he shook his head, his right ankle coming to rest on his left knee, an arm craning over the back of the couch. "You're doin' just fine. I wanted to tell you I'm sorry."

She looked at him as if he'd just admitted to being an alien. It was the last thing she had expected to hear. "What?" She didn't mean to say it so dumbly, but he'd left her dumbstruck.

"I am. Honest to God sorry," his eyes were focused but she could swear she saw a glassy quality to them. "I just... my temper got away from me. You know how I can lose it." He hoped she'd remember, understand; but too many times that temper had fucked up her world and it only made her angry.
"That's not a fucking excuse, Negan. You humiliated me, you pushed me around, all but ran me into the ground," she fought her tears back, successfully this time. "You took Fang. You broke me."

Those three words pained him more than any she'd ever used to jab at him; they'd hurt each other in the past but it had never been his intention to break her.

"I know," he murmured softly, leaning his arm against his outstretched bicep. "I was a fucking idiot about it. Punishment didn't fit the crime."

She scoffed and scowled at him. 'Unbelievable.' "What was my crime? Fucking someone other than you?"

'Stay calm, she's angry.' He breathed deeply, his jaw set.

"I'm a grown ass woman, Negan. Figured with the world gone to hell I'd at least not have to deal with being shamed for wanting sex; but somehow it's so much worse!"

Unable to hold back he wiggled his brows in her direction, that easy grin on his face again. "If all you wanted was sex I'd have gladly stepped up to the plate, sweetheart," he let a hand press against his chest. "Never had any complaints."

Her eyes found his; this time with a regretfulness he knew too well. She sighed; he was really going to make her say it. "It's never just sex with you, Negan," she watched his expression change to a disappointed frown. "You know that."

'She's got you there, old man.' There was a strange mix of pride and chagrin to his thought; and he knew in that moment, he wouldn't want just sex. He wanted everything from her - and why shouldn't he get it? He was finally in a place to give her all he'd wanted to, everything the constraints of their old life kept him from. It was his world now; he could give it to her if he wanted.

"Then why not let it be more, then," he shrugged; his rough fingertips stroked the edge of her shoulder, softly, coaxing. "The Sanctuary is mine to do with as however I fuckin' feel like; why not give in to the urges?" He purred, his cock twitching in those dangerously flimsy boxers.

'How does he know about my urges!?' She asked inwardly; there was a magnetism between them that still filled her with heat, despite her will. "What makes you think we can be together?" She prompted, pressing her thigh tight against the arm of the sofa.

"Because everything that stood in our way is dead and gone." Something in him twisted, to talk about his wife that way; but this was Delle. He'd crawl through glass for her.

"That's total bullshit, Negan," her blood was bubbling in her skin; it'd been weeks since she'd felt so fiery. "You've got a pack of wives you're ready to sneak around on again, you're asking me to fall in love with you, again, and if we were found out, all our history and crap, you would be goddamn ruined. Again."

He grimaced, though she didn't smack his hand away when he started rubbing it against her thigh; so he counted that as a win. "My wives... they're more status, than anything else nowadays," he caught a glimpse of her face but she was remaining steadfast. "Could drop them like a sack of bricks if I felt like it."
She rolled her eyes and pinched the bridge of her nose, fighting a headache and his impetuous nature. "Right; kick those women who haven't worked a day in - months, years I presume? - and expect them to pull their weight. They'd be dead by dawn," she shook her head. "That's not the Negan I know. He wouldn't leave the defenseless out in the cold."

_The Negan you knew wouldn't have built a place like this._' Was his initial reaction, but he tried to push it away. "Feels like you want me to keep the wives just as an excuse not to fuck me." He pointed out, dragging a single finger a little higher on her denim; this time he got a swat.

In a way she guessed she was; it made it a little easier to turn away from him when all her body burned for was his touch. But still; even without them there, she had to resist. "You're delusional." She declared.

"You're just sayin' that 'cause I'm right." that fucking grin; if she was standing her knees would've gone weak. She scolded herself for the reaction, forcing down the attraction. _This isn't the man you loved,'_ she reminded herself. _'He's put you through weeks of hell.'_

"I'm saying it because you're insane; you spent the last month and a half abusing your power and me over me boning someone else. Why the fuck would I go back to you after that?"

His chin dipped, eyes wide and pleading under his brows; Delle was surprised to place the expression as genuinely embarrassed. _'Maybe he's learning.' _"I was a complete shithead, darlin'. I... I haven't been the same man as when I was with you in years, and sometimes big bad Negan takes over the shot calling up here," he tapped his index finger against his skull. "And makes pretty shit choices. He's fucking aces for the Sanctuary, shit for the girl he loves."

She threw her gaze at him with a start; a part of her already knew, but to hear him say it was cool, comforting nostalgia; interwoven with fearful practicality. "You scared the fuck out of me," she confessed, arms now hugging herself now than just crossed. "You weren't yourself; you were just some stranger wearing Negan's skin." A chill ran down her spine when remembering the sick expression on his face as he held Fang from her reach.

"I am so sorry for that, sweetheart," his palm captured her cheek, directing her full attention to him. His skin almost burned to touch, but she never wanted it to stop. _'Stop it.' _"I don't want you to be scared of me; never that. I just got a little turned around; I can really only be my old self when I'm with you," she couldn't help but love the way his eyes crinkled with his smile. "And I love the way that feels."

She swallowed, her eyes flicking away a moment before meeting his again. "That self doesn't work for the Sanctuary though," It was true. The Negan who'd been her hero, her lover, her opponent once or twice, was too gentle, too kind for the world they lived in. "You need Big Bad Negan to keep this place running."

"You're right," he conceded, letting his hand drop back to his lap. "The asshole that built Sanctuary is the only one who can keep it going." He couldn't just step away from it all. The Sanctuary was a home, more over a machine, that he could use to rebuild the world in his image. It was a cold humor that a man like himself was felled by this young woman, yet again.

"So which self is the real one, Coach?" She wondered, waiting for his answer.

He wasn't sure what to say. It was all a part of him, the all powerful tyrant and the hopeless romantic; but only one of them was truly functional in their reality. "It's all me, Delle; sometimes
they're going to mix."

"I don't know if I can survive that mix, Negan," she'd always been blatantly honest with him; even when it cut him deep, she gave him the truth. "I barely survived loving you the first time; what happens if I piss you off again? The more I look at it the clearer it gets..."

Her metaphorical fingers were dug into his heart muscle, poised to rip it out. "What's that?"

Her lip trembled and she caught it in her teeth, trying to hold down the emotions Negan always brought with him. "I just don't work in your world, Negan. Everything about me could wreck you, it could tear your life apart."

"...that might be true, sweetheart, but we've been here before," both hands found her face, holding her still. 'When did he get so close?' Their noses almost touching. "Nothing stopped me from loving you then, sure as fuck nothing will now."

'Fuck his lips look so good,' her devils had her eyes on his mouth, half parted, those white teeth and pink tongue barely visible, so close. 'Just a taste won't hurt...' She was starving and she knew he was delicious; weeks of numbness and depression had resulted in oversensitive nerves and an ache for something physical. It didn't help the situation that she knew Negan to be an expert at all things physical, nor the intimacy and proximity that brought every ounce of their old flame to the top of her mind.

'Keep your guard up, Delle! He's not off the hook!' Thank goodness for her conscience.

"I did," she finally rasped before his mouth fell to hers. Her hands lifted and pressed against him; she ignored the delight of his muscles moving under her palms in favor of pushing him away. "I made you stop."

He smiled, that cocky smirk breaking through his beard. "Oh sweetheart," he growled, making her melt. "I never fucking stopped."

Those strong arms overtook her pushes, pulling her tight, dragging her across his legs as his lips joined hers, fingers tangling in her thick hair as he remembered all the crevices and every taste her sweet mouth kept from him. He waited for her to tug away, scratch his eyes out, scream at him; but she didn't. She whimpered at his touches, those sensitive nerves exploding like fireworks with this overload of stimulation; he was as addictive as he always was and she found herself mindlessly chasing her high. Nails dug into his shoulders, she rocked her hips against his stiffness, grip tightening as their mouths, tongues and teeth warred with each other. He was bent on apologizing, proving his heart; she was ravenous for any and all sensations he shared. Consciences be damned.

He rewarded her whines with groans, wide hands rising up under her shirt, eager for the swell of her breasts in his grasp; they felt somehow even better than he remembered, her nipples pebbling as his fingertips teased the rose colored little peaks. The attention caused her to break from him, lusty, greedy eyes watching the movement under her clothes.

"F-fuck, Negan..." she muttered as the cloth rode up to his wrists; she might have felt a chill on her rack if his heated hands weren't keeping them so well shielded.

"Shh, Delle," he hushed, teeth tugging against her lip, kissing across her jaw. "I'm not done apologizing." With a wink his head dipped, tasting the sweetness of her flesh as he sucked a nipple into his mouth, his hand catching her back as she arched, cried for him. 'God I missed that sound...'
Hideously ill-timed knocking ceased his work, rage flying through his body at being interrupted. "Negan!" It sounded like Wade on the other side; Delle squirmed but he held her there, forehead pressed between her tits.

"WHAT IS IT WADE," The room almost seemed to shake with his voice, drowned in desperation and fury. He thought he heard the door begin to open. "You're fucking fine in the hallway! Just tell me why the fuck you need my precious goddamn time!"

There was a pause, before everything went to shit. "It's Simon's outpost -- they hadn't checked in since last night, Si just arrived -- everyone's dead."

'Oh for fuck's fucking sake!' His dark eyes shot up to Delle's, met with expected, wild anger.

"What the fuck did you do, Negan!?" She hissed; she knew he was jealous, but would he attack his own outpost to take out his rival?

'I can't catch a fucking break.'

Chapter End Notes

Well wasn't that a nice... 3 whole seconds of peace? Never a dull moment with these two!

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Chapter 53

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Before...

Snow on the ground and dry winter air never kept Delle from her leather; that's what sweatshirts were made for. The town always slowed to an almost grinding halt when the first snows of the year hit, which ironically meant both of Delle's jobs picked up speed. Prompted by holiday tradition and obligation, folks would congregate for drinks and reminiscing about the past year, Barnes' pub being an incredibly popular locale for visitors far and wide. Salder's jumped into action as well; the hard little candies made for good stocking stuffers, so she was at no shortage of shifts there.

It was the one and vital time of year Delle had more money than she needed; and for her there was no better gift than being able to keep her head above water for awhile. It meant a bit less face time with Fang and Negan; but she didn't owe either an explanation for keeping her life moving. Fang never asked for one; just glad to have a sister who looked after him so selflessly. Negan was a bit more needy.

4:37 - You free? Just finished with classwork. Want you. -

She glanced at her phone, scoffing as she unbuttoned her jumpsuit and rid herself of the customary Salder's hairnet; she had thirty minutes to get to the bar, a shift that wouldn't end til one in the morning. He could wait awhile longer.

4:40 - Working; you'll have to make do with your hand tonight. -

4:41 - but my hand doesn't make all the hot ass noises you do. -

"Greedy old geezer." She chuckled as she slid her usual fishnets up her legs; below freezing temperatures didn't keep her from her usual wear.

4:44 - you're a needy little bitch aren't you? I've got work. I'm not responsible for you coming or not. -

She threw her phone to her bed as she tugged a long sleeved black top over her head and a black skirt over her hips, hair going up in a messy ponytail; the usual. It would do. Her device chimed and she gasped when she retrieved it. A poorly shot image of Negan's hand grasping a very obvious erection still in his pants had come through; just from his chest down, but familiar enough that she knew it could only be him.

4:47 - but you're responsible for getting me this hard. -

4:48 - DELETE THAT DUMBASS! Fuck! -

4:48 - I'm trying to fuck but you're always working -
She sighed, biting her lip as she took one last, long look at that delicious torso before deleting the picture on her end. She didn't need to get caught with that on her. Grabbing her jacket, she stepped out to leave for her shift only to find Fang just getting home; he was bundled in layers, prepared for the steadily freezing days.

"You're going to die of cold in that, Delle!" He chided, taking one look at her outfit; she rolled her eyes but wrapped an old wool scarf around her neck, trying to appease him. "I'm sure pants would be alright for the bar in winter."

"I look hot as fuck in these, kiddo," she shrugged as he grimaced. "Why deprive the public of these gorgeous gams?"

He scrunched his nose and laughed, toeing off his winter boots. "Gross," he chuckled, glad to slick off most of his layers for the warmth of home. "Late one tonight?"

"Sure is," she confirmed, tugging in her own, heeled boots. Hardly practical on ice; but she looked damn good and had decent balance. "Didn't get a chance to make dinner; think you can survive on cans?"

He nodded, already thinking about a cream of mushroom soup with his name on it; but there was something else on his mind as well. "Hey Delle?"

Her hand was already grasping the door knob but she turned to him, allowing him her attention. "What's up?"

Suddenly he was his usual, bashful self; cheek going pink as he withdrew a folded slip of paper from his pocket. He handed it to her, watching as she opened it, her brows wriggling with confusion, humor and scepticism.

**WINTER WONDERLAND DANCE**

**FRIDAY DECEMBER 19th**

**7:00 PM - MIDNIGHT**

**SEMI FORMAL ATTIRE**

**50$ A TICKET**

"...I take it you'd like to go?" She raised her brows as a blush raised in his cheeks.

"I thought it could be fun..." he muttered, digging his hands in his pockets. "Most of the guys from the ball team are going."

Her apprehension fell on the cost printed in bright blue ink. "50$ is alot, Fang..." her extra money made now would keep them afloat through the frugal, new-years-resolution riddled months of January and February; when everyone tried and failed to give up their vices. As much as she wanted to, the price was too high.

He'd come to the trickier part of the question, the part she was more likely to say no to. "W-well I talked to the planning committee, and the principal... they said they'll cut the cost in half if I bring a... a chaperone for the dance."
Delle couldn't help the look of disgust that found her face; half for the idea of spending a single night with the idiotic teenage masses she'd so recently left, the other for the fact that she was old enough to chaperone them. *This must be how Negan feels all the time.* "Oh god."

She regretted it as his crestfallen reaction took over. "I-I just thought I'd ask..." he said softly; the kid could play her like a fiddle. She ran a hand through her hair, looking up at him. "...is that cunt gonna be there?"

His posture stiffened; they didn't discuss Holly often in their home, but when they did Delle exclusively called her 'that cunt'. He couldn't fault her for it. "Probably." He nodded.

"Okay so my next question; can I rip her apart on sight?"

Delle joked often, but this one she meant in earnest. The girl had crossed the wrong family, and she had hell to pay in those bright eyes. Fang had avoided his now ex girlfriend like the plague since she'd returned to classes, though he'd heard her trying to spread rumors about him. They didn't stick. "It's alright for you to say no," Fang sounded forgiving but he had those puppy dog eyes out. "I know you're not big on the school n' all; just thought it'd be easier if I knew you were there, lookin' out for me."

'Fuck.' She was going to cave, she knew it. Whether through guilt over the lies she'd told him to keep her private life private, or simply as a gift to her brother, she was going to bend. At least a little.  "I'll be on my best behavior." She muttered, hands on her hips.

His demeanor instantly changed; he was thrilled. "So you'll do it?"

"Yeah; Barnes won't be thrilled but just this once--whoa!" She exclaimed as he wrapped his arms around her middle, raising and swinging her like a rag doll. He was grinning ear to ear; one of her favorite things to see, and more of a rarity now.

"Thank you sis!" He kept hugging her as he set her down, honestly excited for the first time since before the incident.

"Calm down; I wasn't about to evil stepmother you out of going to the ball, cinder-fella," she smirked, ruffling his hair. "Tell 'em I'm in. I'll see what I can do for fancy wear." She didn't keep many clothes that could be classified as half way to formal; but she had to have something that would work.

"This'll be great; I'm so pumped!" She was just happy to see him so energetic. Holly had hurt him badly and she was scared she'd not see his old self again; but there was a liveliness in him now, and the fact that she'd helped bring it around was making the prospect of a night corralling sexually starved teenagers seem slightly less painful.

The walk to the bar was frigid, as expected; her knees were turning a lovely shade of wind-burnt pink by the time she got there, kicking particles of slush from her boots.
"You're going to freeze to death in that get up, Delle!" Barnes was at the taps, pouring one out for some of the 5-o'clock-somewhere crowd; she ignored the fact that her father was nestled into his usual booth, nursing what looked like very flat beer, and slid into the back room to dispose of her winter wear.

"You say that now but you know I bring in crowds with this look!" She called back, tucking her layers into a corner next to boxes of ancient receipts and unused coasters - Barnes never threw anything away. Stepping out she whisked an apron from the undershelving, knotting it at her waist. "So, Mister best-boss-in-the-world..." If she was going to plead for time off, she had to make it good.

"Uh-oh, what do you want, Delle?" Barnes had grown accustomed to Delle's sweetness act; it was the only time when she didn't maintain her mouthy nature.

She gulped and grinned, raising a brow. "I'm that easy, huh? I was hoping to get the night of the 19th off." Why mince words?

"The 19th?" He repeated, turning himself to her. "The weekend before Christmas? It'll be a madhouse in here." It was true; out of town relatives would seep into the pub to soothe all the familial obligations the holiday brought with it.

"Not the whole weekend! Just that Friday," she set to work stacking glasses onto shelves below the bar, keeping herself busy and visually reminding him she was useful. "Please? I'll even... you know what I'll work Christmas eve, how's that? You won't have to leave the house and it'll be another day's worth of money you wouldn't have." They were normally closed Christmas eve and the following day, but with a flyer or two up people would flock in for a last minute lubricant before dealing with incessant families.

The large old man sighed but nodded, sticking out his hand. "Deal; hope whatever has you busy that night will be worthwhile."

She grinned as she shook his hand. "Oh definitely."

"Finally got a date?" Barnes couldn't help but be curious. Delle was rough, yes; but anyone with eyes could see she was gorgeous. He always found it hard to believe she wasn't seeing anyone.

"Ha! No, not that," she chuckled, if a little annoyed. Barnes could sometimes be old fashioned in his ideas on relationships; a pretty young thing like herself deserved a strapping young man, or some shit like that. "Definitely not this time of year. Everyone's all mistletoe and love notes and blah." She stuck her tongue out like she was gagging.

"Don't knock it til you've tried it," Barnes retorted with a shrug; he'd be leaving soon, dinner likely waiting at home. He was still unconvinced it wasn't a date. "Hope he's a nice boy and treats you right."

"It's not a date -- and I do just fine on my own!" She called over her shoulder as he went to the store room himself.

'Oh honey you are miles away from fine.'

Her conscience was always jumping to point out how fucked up her one romantic relationship was - not that it wasn't, she knew that. She knew what she was doing with Negan was terrible, knew that
every time he kissed her, touched her, it drove her further on her road to Hell; but damn if she could say no. At this point, she didn't want to. The man had time and time again proved himself capable of withstanding her heat, knowing on instinct how to calm her when her flames burst into wildfires, and being so well versed in the touching of her skin that it seemed as though he was built for her. A man designed just for Delle; the only glitch being that goddamn wedding ring.

Chapter End Notes

Mostly just set up in this one folks; Negan is getting more brash! (As if that's even possible)

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Chapter 54

Chapter Notes

Guess who's back...

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The pair had dressed in a hurry, Delle barely zipping her jacket as Negan slipped on his single leather glove to complete his costume; he gathered Lucille as Delle made for the yard. She couldn't recall the last time she'd run so fast, cool air and hot sun meeting her as she threw open the exit doors; she could just barely hear Negan's footsteps behind her as they swung closed. From her spot above the ground her eyes scanned the surroundings; the usual Saviors readying for supply runs, the prisoners minding the dead. It took a moment for her eyes to fall on the man she sought.

He was sunsoaked, his skin a warm tan now; but what shocked her more was the blood soaked on his hands and clothes. Wade had gone back to speak with him, as he was doing then, but Simon had spotted her on the raised entryway and had lost all interest in the other lieutenant. Delle scrambled down the industrial stair to the packed earth of the yard, pace slowing slightly as Simon marched to her; as he closed in she could see the violent fury burning in his eyes.

"Simon, wh--" before she could get another word out he'd snatched her close, long fingers stringing her hair as his mouth found hers, kissing her with unabashed passion. She'd forgotten how good his tongue tasted, and barely cared for the smearing of blood against her neck and scalp. What she did care for was him kissing her so hungrily under the eye of at least ten other Saviors. He was reuniting with her as much as he was staking his claim in front of as many higher ups as possible; which included Negan, now stepping into the high landing above the scene. He reflexively gripped Lucille so tightly she might splinter; half of him hoping Simon could taste him on her lips.

He broke from her with a gasp, smirking before pulling her into his arms. "Missed you, Twisted." He muttered into her mane before his eyes raised, meeting with Negan's; there was something charged there, a challenge. Clearly Simon had done some thinking of his own, and he was marking his territory.

"You too, bean pole," she smiled against the warmth of his shoulder. The terror and desperation from the day before had all but melted away with his presence; she tried to ignore what portion of that lightness was due to Negan. She pulled back, just enough to look at him but not lose his embrace; the blood spatter had reached his cheek, and he was plainly bushed. "What the fuck happened?" 'Did Negan really send people after you?' She wanted to ask, but knew better than to do so in front of others.

"A fuckin' bloodbath," he shook his head, his eyes falling from her face. "I was out scouting overnight, gave Baxter the night off," his brow furrowed at that; if he'd let him take the mission the two would be in very different places. "By the time I got back everyone was either dead or turned."

"I'm glad you're safe." She whispered as her hands found his cheeks, remembering the feel of his skin and making Negan's blood boil as he joined the pair.
"Simon!" He growled out, his right hand man obediently falling to a knee; but wrapped his arm around Delle's waist as he stood, a proverbial slap in the face to his leader.

"Negan," he greeted, a deep nod of his head darkening his eyes. "The outpost..."

"All went to shit; so I heard," he forced himself not to glare at Simon's long fingers wrapped around Delle's middle. "Seems some fuckers tried to catch us with our pants down, eh?" For all his cheesy lines, Negan was rightly livid; nobody who knew him, his power dared to tangle with the Saviors, and now the blood of his own people was spilt. Not on his hands, no; but he still took responsibility for their deaths.

"Paula radioed in," Wade, ever the communications savant, joined the three of them. "Said something about a pair of hostages; might be able to leverage them for our guys."

"They took prisoners?" Negan was a hair impressed; whoever had pulled this off weren't just blind killers, they had a motive. Turning his attentions to Simon he couldn't help but notice a twitch in the man's mustache. 'Someone's playin' dumb.' "Simon," he prompted, undeniably smug. "Why do you think this little kill squad took hostages." It was the same tone he'd used as a teacher, for students who hadn't been paying attention.

"Probably thought we'd jump to get 'em back," Simon had a quick reply, but not the right one. "Didn't realize who they took. I mean since we're all Negan..." the trained response of his men allowed the genuine Negan total anonymity until he wanted otherwise.

"Right..." he hummed, a grin breaking slightly as he chewed his bottom lip. "What say we head inside? Clean you up; I've got lots of questions for you."

Delle watched the two titans; there was silent worry split between them, but moreover a distrust. Negan had his reasons - she knew that very well - and Simon... maybe he had the same concerns about the attack that she did.

"Will do, boss," Simon acquiesced, but tugged Delle in tight, placing a kiss against her hair. "Mind if I take my girl with me? It's been too long." He grinned at his boss, winking, daring him to pound his head in, knowing he couldn't lose him.

Negan's teeth ground together so hard they could've cracked, his eyes screaming bloody murder at his lieutenant. Delle could see a fight simmering between them; but their egos weren't what mattered at that moment.

"I'll take Simon inside, chief," she blinked up at Negan, knowing a flutter of her lashes would be vital in getting things calmer. "Let's say the old staff room, thirty minutes?"

Negan frowned. Thirty minutes was plenty of time for Simon's hands to wander across Delle's body, all his favorite places; but it meant staving off the war between the two of them for now. "As you like, Delle." He mumbled before turning on his heel. He'd wait at their meeting place, hopefully rub one out to calm his nerves and sate his lust.

Delle took a deep breath, only to feel a pull as Simon took her hand, leading her to his quarters; they'd sat empty since he left, but still contained his belongings. He felt disgusting; he wanted fresh clothes, a thorough shower, and her. He practically raced through the familiar hallways, his little conquest stumbling after him; he seemed to have forgotten she was much shorter limbed than he was.
"Whoa!" Delle exclaimed as they reached his room; he was dragging her in, ready to eat her up. "Easy, bean pole! You ran like the wind, let me breathe."

"No," he snarled, his voice black and hungry as their mouths met again, his tongue searching for hers, quickly joined and groaning. His torso pressed to hers, muscles remembering the sensation of her softest bits on his body, only inciting further starvation. "Fuck I missed you, Miss twisted."

Her body reacted to his; though she wasn't sure if it was entirely him or from Negan's earlier attempts, she knew her mind. "Back at you - it's been way too long." She groaned as his mouth slid to her cheeks, neck, jaw; she could feel those sharp teeth nibbling at her flesh, stimulating all the hot spots he'd learned from their first time.

"Mm..." he purred pleased, tugging her jacket and shirt back to survey her shoulder; tiny pink marks in a ramshackle circle sat there, the long healed remnants of his bite. He kissed over the flesh, and feeling her body jolt, he smiled. "Been thinkin' about how pretty you looked, all bit and bruised... God." His head fell back as her hand cupped the bulge in his pants, learned fingers stroking him teasingly.

"What, I'm not pretty now?" She teased, dragging her teeth - undamaging - across the vein of his throat, wide hands grasping her arms. A hard grasp to his cock earned a low, growling moan. "Last I checked I'm a fucking fox in every form."

"Sweet mother of God," he nearly roared as he pushed away, moving to his drawers for unbloodied - or at least less bloodied - clothes. "Apologies, psycho; you are a fucking goddess - but you didn't give me too wide a window to rock your world." He smirked as he retrieved clean clothing.

That had been somewhat intentional; as pleasure starved as her body was, she knew anything longer than that would have Negan ready to knock Simon's head from his shoulders. If she showed up wearing another bruise or bite it would be worse twice over. She was dying to feel something, but wasn't keen on anyone dying as a result. "Business before pleasure, you old pervert," she chided as he made his way back to her spot at his door. "Need to figure out who was stupid enough to fuck with the Sanctuary."

"That's my smart girl," he kissed her once more, taking her by the wrist again as he made his way to the showers - halfway there he paused, seeing a pair of low ranking Saviors milling about in a hallway. It gave him an idea. "Hey, you two!" He threw on his most authoritative voice, commanding their attention instantly. "Follow along; need you to watch."

"Watch?" She repeated in her head, fast steps carrying the four of them to their destination. Simon turned to the pair, who eagerly awaited his instruction. "Stand guard. I hear that door squeak open for a peek and I'll throw you to the dead." Simon had a real way with people. The two men - already armed, as most Saviors usually were - gulped and nodded, giving their superior the confidence to pull Delle into the communal shower with him. He took a moment to inspect the room; pleased to find noone within. He needed some alone time with her.

"Strip," he ordered, already working away the buttons of his shirt. She blinked before doing as he asked, her jacket zipping off to find a hook on the wall, boots and socks vanishing and her top and jeans lost quickly. He licked his lips approvingly, seeing she was left in her panties as he set aside his weapon and holster, stripped off his khakis. "Awe, you remembered--"

"You like to do this part," she finished, watching as his mouthwatering cock sprang free from his underwear; he'd missed her dearly. She watched as he sank to his haunches, his eyes on hers as his
fingers intertwined with the black waistband, sliding them from her legs as kisses trailed over her. She shuddered as he slid back up her body, skin to skin, hands pressing into her back to push her tits to his torso. "Don't suppose you came prepared?"

"Fu-uck!" He snapped; his cock head had taken over his thinking but had somehow forgot to swipe a condom from his bedside table. As much as he'd kill to feel his come pumping inside her, he knew she was right; it wasn't the right time to go barebacking so recklessly. "Shit... I'm sorry Delle." He looked like a wounded puppy.

She smiled, cupping his face for another fiery kiss. "Let's get you cleaned up for now; you can get your rocks off later." She let her hips sway to the wall lined with shower heads, selecting the one she'd used in her first visit; when Simon and his guard had waited respectfully outside, as she scrubbed off the filth and rot of the world. Now it was Simon's turn. She set the temperature to an even warmth, knowing some folks didn't like their skin boiled on contact as she did and let the stream soak her; releasing a miniscule amount of the built up tension from her time alone. She wasn't sure how much she should tell him; how she'd been sequestered for sleeping with him, how exhaustion, hatred and isolation had almost driven her into a swan dive. She wouldn't dare to tell him about Negan, how his mouth and hands on her flesh, how good it had felt and warmed her heart...

She snapped from her haze as those wide hands wrapped her hips, his persistent erection slick with water against her ass. She looked down to see the steady spray of water taking the caked on blood with it from his digits. "I don't think I can wait, twisted," she moved to squirm away as he turned her around, ready to argue with him as he pressed a kiss to her throat. "Don't get up in arms, won't go sliding in without your go ahead," he grinned as she stilled, allowing herself to marvel at his hard, tanned muscles soaked and slippery. "But I believe I still owe you a little somethin'..." he sank down to his knees again, finding a good vantage point and hauling one of her legs over his shoulder.

"Oh..." she breathed, feeling his fingers stroke her outer folds, already soaked in ways other than water. "Well don't let me stop you, Si. Eat up." She moaned long and loud as his tongue ran from her hole to her clit, hard pressed twists playing around the aching pearl of nerves. She'd forgotten about the two Saviors standing guard outside; not caring when she remembered. 'Let 'em listen.'

"Mmff..." a muffled moan resonated against her pussy, Simon's tongue talented and laving over her bundle of nerves, fingers holding her open and toy ing with her entrance. She shivered and clutched at his damp hair, her head leaning against the slick tiles behind her. "Goddamn, twisted, you taste like honey..." He received an excited whimper in response, smiling against her as he lapped away, eager to remind her sex how good he made her feel - not that she could forget.

"Fuck, Simon!" She panted when he slipped a long digit inside her, curling softly to prod her sweet spot, instantly drenching it; he chuckled but didn't cease his movements, letting his lips lock around her clit and suckle mercilessly, tongue flicking all the while. It was intense stimulation, pressure and pleasing from all sides. His hand found her hip and kept her steady as she trembled, her pelvis involuntarily bucking into his mouth for more, greedy for every lick. "Mm yes, just like that..." she mumbled, gasping in the steaming air as he clamped down with his lips, his head shaking slightly for an excess of touch that stirred up an orgasm at record speeds.

"Give it to me, sweetheart; let me taste my girl's come." he growled through her moans, a second finger doubling down on his inside efforts, feeling her walls beginning to constrict, flutter. He let out a lengthy groan as her hands tightened around his head, pulling him as tight as she could while she ground up against his mouth and tongue.
"O-oh yes, yes Simon, there, fuck!" She unraveled; her body a vice around his fingers when she came, his hand and mouth soaked in his earnings. Her toes curled, back arched, pussy flush with his still active and hungry mouth. He rode it out with her, the heavy inner and outer stimuli slowing gradually, letting her come down as lazily and long as possible. "Fuck..." she mewled again, her hip aching as he removed her thigh from his shoulder, standing while slurping her excitement from his fingers with exaggerated enthusiasm.

"Really, Delle," he muttered, licking his lips and drawing her worn body close. "Just like honey; taste." He smirked as his mouth fell to hers, thrusting his tongue between her lips; she didn't taste honey, per se, but there was a mild sweetness to it, something slick and almost syrupy in texture. Her hands cupped his cheeks, thumbs toying with the edges of his mustache while they kissed.

"Mm, not to my palate; but if that's what you taste then no complaints here." She grinned, the spasms shooting through her body began to dissipate as Simon scrubbed his skin free of blood and sweat; though he took extra care not to wash his mouth or chin, citing his want to be able to smell and taste her while he dealt with Negan.

"I really fucking needed that," he sighed, cracking his neck and satisfying cleaned. "Finding the outpost like that, plus all that time away... I missed what's mine."

"What's he mean what's his?" She thought best not to air her question with their limited time. He was already patting his more sensitive areas dry with his old clothes, slicking his hair back from his face; wet it looked more tame and manageable than she'd ever seen it.

"Comin' with, twisted?" He asked, doing up his buttons.

"Think I'll hang back," her presence would only act as fuel for the storm brewing between the two men; not to mention she had a feeling Negan would know what had transpired the second he laid eyes on her. He knew her too well. "Enjoy a proper hot shower while I can. I get the feeling there's a colossal shit storm on the horizon."

"You might be right," he nodded, fully dressed and going for the door. "Nobody fucks with the Saviors and lives to tell." She smiled to herself as he exited, heard him command his impromptu guard to stay til she was finished. Alone for the first time that day, her mind was sent reeling at the excess of information she'd been fed from all sides.

"Who the fuck tried to attack the Saviors?"

"Who'd be stupid enough to fuck with Negan?"

"He still loves me."

"What's Simon mean, I'm his?"

"Should I tell him about the roof?"

"Did he notice I haven't been eating, sleeping?"

"Negan still loves me."

"Who are those hostages?"
'Is it all a lie?'

'Would Negan kill three dozen men just to kill Simon?'

'What have I got myself into this time?'

'Negan still loves me.'

Chapter End Notes

...oh me oh my.

Getting back on track after my less than exciting set up chapter. Here we go guys! Delle's world is about to get a whole lot bigger.

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment!! Each and every one of you keep me inspired and on track with this story. Love you guys ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 55

Chapter Notes

I lay zero claim to any songs referenced in this chapter :) full ownership to OG artists!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Before...

"You fucking owe me for this, Thompson." Negan grumbled into the receiver of his cell phone, fussing with his collared shirt. Sean Thompson, the history teacher, had drawn the short straw in proctoring the winter dance that year; only to have a 'family emergency' crop up at the last second. Why Negan had been the flake's first call, he'd never know.

Thompson was still muttering gratitude and apologies into his ear when he ended the call abruptly, heaving a charcoal blazer he hadn't worn in ages onto his shoulders. It topped a white collared shirt and pitch black pants. He normally saved this kind of look for graduations, athletic banquets, or dates; but none of those were coming up for months at least. He didn't cut a bad figure, but he wasn't looking forward to a night with the giggly teens who flocked to his side in the hallways during the day; night was his time, when he could decompress.

'Only one giggly teen you want flocking to your side, you dog.'

'Please, she never giggles.'

He sighed, eying his phone; she was working near back to back now, meaning she had next to no time for him. He wondered when she slept, and when he'd see her again. It hadn't helped that Lucille was home, unusual for her work schedule, but still barely spoke to him. It felt like he had a roommate he barely knew; if only that were the case. With a roll of his eyes he grabbed his keys and a scarf, lamenting having to leave his prized leather at home. The blazer would have to hold up to the cold.

"You look nice."

He stopped in his tracks, steps from his front door. Lucille was curled up at their kitchen table, a mug of tea in her hands. He couldn't recall the last time she'd said a word to him - but then, he didn't even realize she was home.

"School dance tonight," he shrugged, his natural grin on his lips. "Get to spend an evening prying horny teen mouths apart - lucky me."

She smiled, a silent laugh shaking her shoulders. She hadn't told him what had happened; the baby, or lack of one. She wasn't sure yet that she wanted him to know.

"I'll be home late," he muttered, wrapping on the scarf. "Might grab a beer after."

She remained silent, just nodding. This; this lack of intimacy, strained acquaintance relationship that
their marriage had become broke his heart. At least, until he'd found a soothing salve by the name of Delle.

"Negan?" She called softly; it raised his eyes to hers; he waited for her words, but she found nothing would come out. She could only smile, give a little wave of her hand and watched as that hardness found his face again.

"I'll see you later." And he was gone, off to the dance.

________________________________

The School Spirit Committee had gone all out with the construction paper and glitter.

The gymnasium smelled the same, sweat and tears, as Negan walked in, but it looked ridiculously different; paper snowflakes of every size and shape hung down from the ceiling, some of the budget having gone to low, blue lighting that made the blue, shiny fabric at the DJ booth glisten. A few tables sat here and there, the same glittery blue coating them; and from the basketball hoops on either end of the room were strung with paper garlands. *Don't underestimate a teenage girl with a pair of scissors.* He remarked inwardly, the room still empty aside from the mostly female committee who were frantically sorting with their decorations and outfits.

"Coach!" The club chair - Sarah, he thought? - dashed up to him, a pin and silvery snowflake in her hands. "W-we need to pin this on, so everyone knows you're a chaperone." He glanced over to a few parents, other more willing volunteers to reign in the children, wearing similar patches.

He nodded, taking the paper decoration and pinning it to his lapel; a strange little boutinnere. "Done and done." He replied with a smile; the blue lights did little to hide the rampant blush on the girl's face. Another crush at Negan's feet.

"T-thanks by the way," she squeaked. "For covering for Mr.Thompson."

"Don't mention it," he replied, glancing at his watch. "Think it's time to get this show on the road."

She nodded and ran to her minions, each taking their places; an older student manned the music, which would no doubt be a slog of Top 40 pop hits all night.

The doors opened, a surprisingly large wave of the student populace filtering in; crisp white shirts and badly laced ties, flouncy, sparkly skirts and dresses all done in wintery tones splayed across the gym. They were impressed, at least. He sidled up against a wall, vigilant but not particularly caring; so long as noone got stabbed or pregnant on his watch he'd consider the night having gone smoothly. He rolled his eyes and shut them as a bass heavy song filled the air at an impossibly loud decibel, imagining the headache he'd be going home with.

"Best keep your eyes peeled, Coach; these kids are your responsibility tonight." *No fucking way.* He opened his eyes to an utter dream. Delle was perched before him, hand on her hip and looking decidedly unlike herself; she'd poured herself into a black cocktail dress with thin straps and a flared skirt, her shapely legs feeding down into sling back black heels. Whatever she'd done to her hair was working for him, the normal forest tamed into raven waves on her shoulders. A silver snowflake that matched his own was pinned into one strap, but all he could really focus on was her bright eyes shining out from dark lashes, emphasized with makeup. He felt like he could faint.
"Hot damn," he breathed, letting his eyes dance up and down her frame. "You look... wow."

"Oh shut up I look wow all the time," she scoffed with a wave, surveying the students around them. "You got roped into this too, huh?"

He snickered, giving a tilt of his head. "Sure did. Thompson was supposed to, came up with some bullshit excuse at the last second."

"Douchebag," she declared, crossing her arms; he tried not to stare as it pushed her cleavage up. "Fang really wanted to go; suckered me into it."

"Heh, that boy might turn out to be a Cornish after all." He remarked, letting his eyes slide up her back; something about seeing her like that set something different off in him. He pictured how the dress would fall away from her creamy skin as he unzipped it, how the skirt would ride up with his head underneath it. It didn't cross his mind that she was having similar, opposing thoughts about him. The wonders a little dress up can do.

"I, uh..." she cleared her throat, her vision catching on the stereotypical punch bowl against the far corner of the gym. "I'm going to man the punch; see who tries to spike it this year," before she walked away she tossed him a look, her hair fanning across her back and he almost passed out. "Promise I'll share whatever I confiscate."

"Good girl." The words he normally only purred in her ear in far more nude situations caused a flood in her panties, one she tried to ignore as she clicked over to the furthest station away from him. He looked good most days, but that night he looked delicious; it took all her dignity to keep from climbing him like a tree as soon as she laid eyes on him. 'Be good, Delle,' her conscience tried to keep her inevitable derailment on track. 'You're doing this for Fang!'"

He grinned as her hips rocked back and forth, the heels creating a sexy sway in her walk; suddenly his night was looking so much brighter.

As the dance wore on and paper snowflakes split from their tape and tumbled to the dance floor, Negan was subtly sneaking his way around the perimeter of the gym to the punch bowl; at least, he thought it was subtle. Delle watched as he used minor student interactions to coax himself to her location; it'd be endearing if it weren't so dangerous. Would be rebels had been trying to season to punch all night; so far she'd collected two water bottles full of vodka, a swiped-from-a-parent flask of spiced whiskey, and some idiot had even tried to add a bottle of mouthwash. She'd chewed him out hard for that one; he'd bought the non alcoholic type.

'Kids don't know how to sneak anymore,' she shook her head as she stored the bright blue bottle under the table with its cousins. 'I could show 'em a thing or two.'

'Yes Delle, you're a queen of sneaking around in secret.'

Her better angels hated all the things her devils loved about her; particularly anything having to do with Negan. She knew how terrible she was for it; she was going to hell, no doubt about it. But the things her man, her devil inspired were something otherworldly. He never tried to make her feel like she was normal; he accepted her oddities and loved her for it.

'He loves me.' She'd allowed herself to think it only a handful of times; although she'd never said it
out loud, nor let him do it either, she knew he was head over heels for her. She didn't hate it like she used to; she'd begun to enjoy the thought. No, her hatred was leaning to herself again, and the stirs and fluttering in her stomach when she thought of him. It was how she suspected she'd have felt earlier, had there been no ring, no wife; but she found that pesky emotion nigh on inescapable now. No matter how she ran.

"Fancy seein' you here!" Negan chirped cheerfully, now at the end of his little quest. She glanced to his wide grin, hands slunk into his dark pants and bit her lip for the want of what was underneath. 'Attractive bastard.'

"I know it's nuts; almost like I was fucking asked to be here." She dripped sarcasm and he lapped it up.

The music was loud, pulsating; the student manning the speakers considered himself a veritable DJ, supplying every pop song imaginable from the school provided laptop. A new one had just started and the teens were reacting to it in its every intention.

-I've got more wit

A better kiss

A hotter touch a better fuck

Than any boy you'll ever meet

Sweetie you had me,-

Such a song would've rolled off Delle's back like nothing, if she were in the company of anyone else; but next to Negan her cheeks were deepening red. She knew he noticed.

"How'd this kid manage to get the okay to play this?" She asked over the thump of the song; the school, when she attended, had specific policies about any music deemed too 'provocative'. It didn't stop kids then and wouldn't now.

"Boy must be an evil genius!" Negan laughed before making his way to the platform the young man stood on. A few choice words had him white as a sheet, switching up the track obediently. The mass of sex crazed adolescents groaned, but Negan's firm eye and crossed arms shut them up quickly. 'Heh, still got it.' He sauntered back to his spot next to Delle, a wide smile on his face while she raised a weary brow.

The next track was no less appropriate.

-I asked her to stay

But she wouldn't listen

And she left before I had the chance to say, oh

The words that would mend

The things that were broken
She rolled her eyes away from him, not wanting to dwell on the implications of the lyrics; only for her eyes to fall on her brother with a worrying expression. He'd fancied up for the evening too - a tie and combed, coiffed hair - and she'd been glad to let him go off with his teammates, but it seemed a certain blond haired, entitled cunt was bent on ruining the night. Holly wouldn't leave him alone.

"What's the matter, Fang? You don't want to dance with me?" The little blond slurred. She had a gang of similar girls backing her up, giggling at her japes.

"No, Holly; please leave me alone." Fang and Delle had been over this; don't react, don't suffer her bullying. It'd worked thus far but the girl was getting mouthy.

"C'mon sweetie; you're the one who ditched me at the station, I should be mad at you!" She wobbled in her sparkly, too high heels.

"Holly stop," he faltered as she grabbed his arm, giving it a mean tug. "Let go of me!"

"HEY!" Delle was at his side in a flurry of stomping feet, her glare burning a hole in the back of Holly's skull. "The kid wants to be left alone, girl; how 'bout you do that?"

Holly merely scoffed; she wasn't about to take orders from some shrimpy sister. "Oh my god, you brought your sister to this!? God could you get any more backwoods trashy?"

While fang shrank at her comment, Delle saw red. "I'm a chaperone tonight, student," she said pointedly, stepping into the girl's space. "Fang doesn't want to talk to you. Leave him alone."

Holly didn't know when to shut her trap. "God you two are so tweaked! He's a pussy and you're just some brother fucking cunt!"

Thank goodness Negan came up behind Delle when he did; soft fingertips on her shoulder cooled her enough not to rip the girl's throat out. "Hey there, Holly," he drawled, a smile on his face but no humor for her stupidity. "Seems a little late for you to be out. Why don't you head on home?"

She knew to tread lightly; Negan was a well respected teacher. "Coach he wouldn't leave me alone!"

She whined; the girl had never been made privy to the fact that Negan had come to Fang's aid that night. "Then him and his sister ganged up on me! Send them home!" She couldn't have come off more bratty if she had stamped her feet in protest.

"Yeah -- that won't be happening, Missy," he shook his head and towered over the girl. "I heard loud n' clear what you just said to Miss Cornish here, and if what you said to her brother was half as rotten then you should've been out on your ass an hour ago."

"B-but..." she was used to getting her way. Her daddy had even managed to talk down her underaged DUI charge with a few carefully placed words and bills.

"But nothing," he continued. "So you can run on home and bitch about how terrible Coach Negan is, how I'm 'just the worst!' Or I can call your parents and let 'em know you showed up to a school function wasted."

The way the color drained from her face told him his guess had been right; he didn't know for sure
but his gamble had paid off. Holly stammered a few more times before screeching, sparkly heels clacking against the polished floor as her flock of followers trailed after her.

"Thanks for that, Coach," he turned to a shy smile from Fang; the boy seemed to have had a weight lifted from him, watching his ex girlfriend leave. "You didn't have to do that."

"Heh, was nothin'," he grinned, patting the boy's shoulder. "Hang with the boys; maybe you'll meet a nice girl tonight." Her brother gone, Negan turned his eye to Delle. She was looking up at him; the blue light coloring her features and casting shadows on an expression he'd never seen on her before. It was gentle, sweet; soft parted lips, lashes low with her upward gaze. He felt the look stir something inside him, and he named it. It was the same way he looked at her.

"Take me somewhere." She commanded quietly, just silent enough that only he heard her.

"Yes ma'am." And away they fled.

- Just give me one more chance to make it right

I may not make it through the night

I won't go home without you

And I won't go home without you-

Chapter End Notes

Part one of the dance, folks ;) hope it's to your liking thus far!

(Also yes I used corny on the nose pop songs sue me ♡)

Like my writing? Leave me a comment! I love hearing from all of you and your words help me to write faster ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 56

Chapter Notes

Oh yes...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Before...

The nearest room available was a storage room; rubber dodge balls tumbling down as Delle and Negan stumbled in, her mouth melding to his just as soon as the door shut. He growled into her lips, strong hands gripping at her waist and pulling her tight, their bodies reacting to one another like chemical fireworks. Their surroundings didn't allow for much comfort; the best Negan could think of in the moment were drawstring bags of old uniforms, gym towels and flag markers. They were slightly softer than the polished wood flooring. Her hands wound into his lapels, her tongue swirling across his lips as he attempted to set her down; keep her comfortable, but she broke to stop him.

"No," she panted out, turning their places and shoving him down, his arms spread across the piles of sacks and eyes leering up at her in the half darkness. "I want to say thank you." As soon as she said it she knelt before him, watching his face as her hands worked away his button and zipper fly; lips already moist and ready.

"Mm well you go on, Delle," he grinned, letting his hands drift behind his head while raising his hips, just enough for her to shimmy his slacks down to his thighs. He was already half stiff and hardening steadily as she pulled him from his boxer briefs, stroking his length while her tongue ran from base to tip, lapping at his velvety head; it didn't take much to get him to full mast. "Mm I missed that mouth..."

"Missed this cock," she replied before wrapping her lips around the flared tip, a satisfied hum purring in his throat. Her cheeks hollowed as she slid down, reminding herself how every tense muscle and pulsing vein felt against her sensitive tongue. She reveled in his taste, musky and salted; she hadn't taken him like this since the away game with a heavy cloud of inebriation emboldening her efforts. She felt no need for it this time; she wanted to remember every inch and flavor. "Mm..." she groaned at the bitter taste of his seed dripping from his tip; it excited her actions, hands running up his shirt while she picked up speed, head bobbing and slurping up all he had to offer.

"Ah-- that's my good girl," he grunted and let one hand string through her waves; he watched her take control over him, that barbed tongue soft and sweet against his skin, making him impossibly harder. Pleased little whimpers bloomed in her throat, vibrating off the edge of his dick and drawing out long groans and cussing praises. "You look so fuckin' good babygirl..."

She didn't respond, only furthered her pursuit of his release. One hand moved to grip him at the base, swiveling strokes teaming up with her suckling for added stimulation; it paid off, his head falling back and hips bucking into her worship. She commended herself, recalling how this had driven him wild the first time; his sex completely engulfed by her talents, adoring her in speech and animalistic moans. His manhood pulsed in her grip, in her lips; a heftier supply of precome was weeping from
"Shit, ahh -- Delle come up here, I want to fuck you--" Negan's plea was met with a slight shake of her head, the steady, wet bounce of her mouth on his length never letting up; as had been before, in this position she was in total control. Her bright eyes peered through the dark at him, almost glowing, bewitching him as her soft mewls against his cock became overwhelming; he couldn't hold back any longer. "F-fuck--!" He cursed - louder than he should have - his body leaning forward and both hands gripping her hair, pulling her down as far as her fist would allow, his seed gushing across her impatient tongue, painting her throat in white.

She gagged, more due to pressure than of taste; his thick come was sharp but not unpleasant in taste, and as she swallowed it down she found herself wanting it again. She allowed for a few more soft sucks to his softening length while his body quivered, jolting with exertion; it always took him a little longer to come down in this state.

"S-sweetheart you gotta stop," he finally begged; she was pliant in that, slipping him from her mouth despite her delight in how he felt. As she freed him his arms dipped, wrapping around her waist to draw her up, over his lap; it left her just over his eye level, where he could study her smug expression with ease. "That was fucking fantastic sweetie; but don't you want me to fuck you?"

Her head tilted with a sly grin. "What's the matter, can't get it up more than once a night you fucking geezer?" It felt good to be teasing him; distracted from the ache building in her heart.

His hand swung free and smacked her backside, something stirring in him with her yelp. "You shut your mouth, you little shit; give me a minute and I'll pound you so hard you'll forget your own name."

She licked her lips before pressing them to his; whatever trace of his release was left there he couldn't taste, she had been starving for it. "How could I possibly forget my name when you'll be roaring it the whole time?"

"Cocky little lady aren't you?" The same hand that spanked her slid up under her skirt, glad for her predisposition against panty hose; his fingers pressed against her cotton coated mound, smirking to find her damp and wanting while his digits circled her clit. "My oh my and needy too."

Her arms jumped to his neck when he shoved her panties aside, fingertips making direct contact with her soaked folds. His familiar fingers gathered the slick from her hole, curving it around her clit for gliding, graceful massage; it arched her back and shook her legs, forcing her to bite her lip. "Unh... what do you expect? I was doin' all the work," her mouth opened in a gasp as one finger sank into her tightness, petting her softest, most responsive spots. She cantled her hips against his workings, that wide palm pressing against her bud of nerves again. "Was bound to get a little - mm - riled up."

"Then relax, babygirl," he chuckled against her lips, feeling her mouth gape as another finger joined his first, scissoring a constant pressure inside her pussy while his unoccupied thumb mashed her nerves from outside. "It's my turn to work you over; just loosen up and let me make you come."

She followed his lead, letting her arms steady herself on his frame, knees wavering under the mismatched contents of their placement; she forgot about the unbalance quickly as his second hand tugged down a dress strap, exposing her breast to his kisses and suckling. She trembled as he conducted a symphony around her body; his hand drenched in her excitement, fingers thrusting as firmly as his thumb caressed her clit, mouth closing around her already oversensitive nipple and
inspiring a series of moans she tried to choke down. There was something comfortable about his actions; even with his mistakes she found her defenses falling around her that much faster when he touched the right spots, kissed the right flesh. It was more than just his physical capabilities, she knew that to be true; she was trusting him again.

His tongue swirled and her skin electrified, every nerve singing when his third finger wriggled inside her, stroking in varied times while he trade his thumb for his palm, pressing hard and pushing her closer to the precipice. She cursed and murmured his name, clamping tighter and tighter around his digits. "Mm you like that; can't get yourself off quite like this, can you, sweetheart?" He snickered when she had no quip in her chamber, only concerned with all the decadent, sinful things he was doing to her; he loved her like this, truly unraveled and freed from the moral dilemmas that plagued her mind.

Even if he was most often the cause of said dilemmas, this was his favorite way to resolve them for her.

He pushed it from his mind, focusing on the task at hand; he kissed his way up her chest, throat, cheeks, laying claim to her mouth in his favorite method. Light nibbles on her lips had her wobbling on the point of no return, her hips rocking in tandem with his hand; when he pressed every inch of his skin to hers, shivering it at a rapid speed to stimulate each spot it touched, she was a goner.

"Yes, yes -- Negan, ahh!" She threw her head back with an arch of her spine, his free hand instinctively flying to cover her mouth and muffle to satisfied screams she emitted. Her pleasure dripped from her cunt, wetter if that was possible, his fingers unceasing until she pleaded otherwise, hands weakly clawing at his neck to stop. He let loose that shit-eating grin of pride as he worked his fingers loose; based how her body spasmed and clamped when he tried to move he bet he could've stayed playing with her for hours.

"Feelin' better?" He mocked as her head rested on his shoulder, giving him a moment to lick his earnings from his fingers. His other, dry hand stroked her back, cooling the sparks and twitches through her body inch by inch. "Taken care of?"

He could feel her smile against the skin of his neck, an oddly chaste kiss planted there. "That'll do," she purred, hoisting her head up to look at him, a hand on his cheek. "Wasn't bad for some ancient fuck with arthritis." Her snide remark left another spank against her ass, her body curving flush against his; realizing a newfound hardness against her thigh. He was nearly good to go again.

"You and that mouth," he growled, tugging at her panties; he wasn't the least bit sorry as they tore in his hands, pulling the annoying bit of fabric away. "You're one to talk, straddling my lap like this; could even say you're robbing the grave." He hummed in his chest as her hand slid between them, gripping his hard, prestimulated cock. A few strokes got him back to full attention.

"Call me whatever you want, Negan; but I need you to fuck me right now." In a swift motion she guided him home, her sensitive, post-orgasm walls stretching and fluttering around his manhood. He groaned and rested his hands at her hips, digging against her skirt as he plunged in to the root, gasping as his head hit deep.

They barely spoke, only exchanging whimpers and moans once they'd found their pace; Negan thrusting his hips evenly, fluidly, while Delle rolled hers in rhythm with his actions. Neither would last long, they knew that; but he needed to be inside her as much as she needed him there, and that much they could handle, however brief. Kisses shared between the two muffled their groaning, if only a little while the speed increased; only a few thrusts in and she was already beginning to seize
like they'd been going at it for hours. Not that he wasn't close himself. One hand cupped her cheek, prompting eye contact as she got closer and closer; he watched as the dam broke in her, another intense orgasm crushing around his length and drawing out his own; a new load shooting deep inside her, growls of animal pleasure invoked by the reactions of the other.

Equal measures of gasps left the pair, his arms now hugging her tight, both her palms on his cheeks, drawing patterns into his beard; neither looked away, she didn't move off of him, nothing would've convinced him to pull from her heat at that second. Her mind, though a bit hazy, thought of how he'd defended her; not that he had to, she was strong on her own, but her brother had needed a firm hand and a friend in his corner, and Negan had done so without hesitation. He protected his own; something she loved.

'Oh no,' her conscience was scrambling, listing all the reasons to run away, pack up and leave town that second and never see his face again. 'Oh no, don't you dare; don't make this worse than it already is, you don't have to, stop, stop--!'

All the reasons not to went silent for the one reason that told her to do it.

Admit it.

Say it.

"I love you." She breathed, a fearful, shaky whisper off her lips; it shocked her that she didn't regret it immediately. It shocked him that she'd said it at all. It was a quiet surrender to everything he made her feel, to the array of emotions she'd been surpressing. It near brought him to tears that she was finally letting herself feel it; this was her, raw, bare, exposed and vulnerable for his eyes alone. She'd never looked more beautiful. His arms squeezed tighter, his expression so soft and welcoming it barely looked like Negan for a split second - until he spoke.

"I love you too, Delle." His grin had changed, now not pride but but admiration and adoration fueled him, knowing she was swept up in the same torrid, unpredictable emotion he was; that try as she might they would never be just sex. His kiss was passionate, warm against her mouth, a relieved sigh leaving her when he held her tightly, unwilling to let go. There would always be a sadness to their love, knowing it could only exist to each other, behind closed doors and in quiet whispers; but it finally felt like that was enough. Like she could live with that. He kissed her over and over again, his length slipping free from her sex; she shuddered and pulled back, making him pause.

"We should get back," she breathed, glancing over her shoulder. "Somebody's probably noticed you're gone." She was right; Delle could've left and hardly anyone but Fang would've batted an eye, but the faculty chaperone was a noticeable absence.

"Right you are, sweetheart," he helped straighten her from his lap, swaying on her heels a bit before regaining her footing. Negan followed suit, his own knees a little weak; a bit from the vigorous sex in an uncommon place, more so caused by her admission of love. He was giddy as a teenager, feeling like his first time falling in love, glad to be hers. "Hey Delle."

She paused sorting out her hair and dress, resigning herself to keeping her thighs close all night to keep his come from dripping out of her. "Yes?" Wide hands cupped her face, pulling her in for one more kiss; closed mouths but somehow more intimate, fed by a new kind of passion. She was
nervous, she was scared; but she was glad for who she'd chosen to walk through the fear with. He pulled back and leaned his lips to her forehead before allowing her to exit first, restoring his clothes in haste then trailing after her.

She smiled as he locked up the storage room, her head awash in fresh emotions and ideas; it spun and reeled with how to keep herself quiet, as much as she wanted otherwise. With a nod and light peck they started down the hallway to return to the gymnasium; a sound from the far end catching her attention and stopping her heart.

At the end of the corridor, eyes wide and mouth aghast, stood Fang. She'd never seen him so shocked, angry, upset; betrayed.

'Oh no.'

There was no getting out of it this time.

Chapter End Notes

...oh no.

This one was a big deal folks! I may take an extra day before posting the next chapter, just to get all my events working right.

Like my writing? Leave me a comment! I love hearing from each of you and all your words help inspire me and keep my words going.♡♡♡♡
Cold white light streamed through the industrial windows at Negan's back, a grid pattern shadowed across the makeshift board room as Simon joined him - alone. He wasn't about to question him on Delle's whereabouts as much as he wanted to; his eyes just tracked him like prey on the hunt as his lieutenant crossed the room, taking his usual, ironic seat at his right hand. Negan's heels rested on the edge of the table, regarding the man, his arms crossed over Lucille; her presence the only thing reminding him not to kill him.

"Squeaky clean?" He asked gruffly with a raise of his brow. The air was thick with the clash of their egos.

"As a whistle," Simon gave him a relaxed smirk, leaning an arm on the table. His mind was still on his shower, her taste on his tongue. As superior as he felt he tried to focus on the incident; he'd lost friends, good men. "So... the outpost."

"The outpost," Negan repeated; he had to set aside his hurt in favor of his people. Some faction had up and decided to attack his men, something he considered a direct attack on himself. Each and every soul who earned the title of Savior were vital to his operation; it didn't function without living bodies. Whoever had decided to ambush the outpost had just signed themselves up for a world of hurt; and he had a hunch Simon had more to say than he'd let on. "Any ideas on who might've been brainless enough to cross me?"

Simon's lips pursed, his brow knitting before shaking his head in answer. 'Right -- bullshit.'

"Really?" He half grinned, dipping his chin and staring daggers at him. "Not a clue in that skull of yours? I find that very fucking hard to believe."

Simon's eye shifted from his boss's; Negan was all but certain there was something he wasn't saying.

"C'mon Simon, you're a smart man," he coaxed, rolling his wrist to pick up the pace. "Get those gears turning. 'Cause from where I'm sittin', one of my top guys just let a bunch of fuck wads waltz in and kill my fucking people," His heels left the table, leaning forward with a sharp look. "Is that the fuckin' case, Simon?"

This - this was Negan's speciality. Intimidation, intelligence; people didn't fuck with him when those near black eyes burned into their souls, as he was doing to Simon now. This was how he'd wound up on top.

His second-in-command gulped down nothing before he spoke, his arms crossing as some imaginary defense. "Well... the Hilltop aren't lookin' too innocent right now."

'Bingo. ' "The Hilltop?" Negan echoed; he'd met with the leader of that community a handful of times - Gregory. He was a coward of a man who buckled as soon as he'd seen Lucille swinging his way; he didn't seem like the type to suddenly grow a pair. "Those wimpy farmers? Why would they go
swingin' their dicks all of a sudden?"

Simon's mustache twitched again; he'd done something he shouldn't have. "Well..." he started slow, preparing his body to jump if that barbed bat heaved his way. "They've been short, the last few donations..."

"Mmhmm?" He nodded, waiting for the other shoe to drop.

"I... may have demanded his head on your behalf." His body flinched on instinct as Lucille struck the table's surface, a laugh booming in Negan's throat.

"Well goddamn, Simon!" He pulled himself from his chair, his full height seeming all the more ominous the angrier he got. "That sounds like a pretty fine fucking reason for someone to find their balls and turn on us!" His subordinate sat, stewing and pouting; he'd overstepped, but Hilltop wasn't taking their offerings seriously. Throwing Negan's name out put a little extra muscle on his words.

"It's fucking Gregory!" He finally spat, throwing up his hands. "He's a spineless little weasel; sure he's slimy, but he knows not to get his ass killed." This was a fact about the greasy old man; he'd made his alliance with the Sanctuary in a flash, knowing it safer to bend to Negan than to fight back. Sure he'd done it save his own skin, but he knew well that his people were in no way ready to do battle with the Saviors' militia.

But then, maybe it wasn't his people who'd attacked.

Gregory had made a deal Negan in a snap; who else was he willing to bargain with to get on unscathed?

"I want some face time with the bald bastard," Negan declared, Lucille coming to rest on his shoulder. "I smell a rat -- or two." The look he shot Simon then was impossibly cruel; he knew his right hand wouldn't have killed his own men, but he had a plethora of other reasons to hate him in that moment.

"I can be ready to go in 20," Simon stated and stood; setting aside Delle, he wanted to find out who the culprits were. "Rattle his cage, get you the intel--"

"--did I not just say I wanted fucking face time?" Negan stormed, eyes on Simon. "I'll go my fucking self; you can come along, sit nice and quiet and see how a real man handles shit." He involuntarily puffed his chest out; though nearly the same height he felt 10 feet tall.

Simon's anger swirled at the back of his throat, threatening to spew out in furious words, hitting him where it would hurt most; the black haired bright eyed firecracker they both had eyes for. 'She picked who's eyes to strip for, though.' The idea calmed him, just enough to nod in agreement with his leader.

Negan felt little relief in tearing Simon a new one over his error; Delle had still left with him, still chose him in that moment. He knew he was nowhere close to paying her back for her slow torture over the past weeks, but the sight of them together made his blood boil. He wanted so badly to act, bring the full force of his power down on Simon's head and make him regret the day he was born; but if he gave himself over to that self, the wicked one who commanded his armies and ruled over this violent world, Delle might slip from his fingers forever. And that couldn't happen again.

He'd still find a way to rub Simon's nose into the massive shit storm he'd whipped up though.
"We'll set out tomorrow. Bring that little maniac with us," he smiled as Simon's face darkened, suddenly threatened. "She's bound to put the fear of God in him; at least the fear of me." He excused himself with hearty chuckles, letting Simon drown in his foolishness; he had to inform Delle of their upcoming field trip.

Though only a day had passed, it had felt like years since Delle had been in her own room; her sanctuary at Sanctuary, the one place she felt slightly at home. She went through the process of lacing her hair into a braid; still halfway damp it would keep the slick tendrils from her neck. The monotonous process would also give her a rare few moments to think.

The Negan she'd known that morning was virtually indistinguishable from the man the day before; it was jarring but familiar, the way he'd looked at her, the way he'd touched her. 'Why did I let him touch me?" She wondered as her fingers wove strands of hair; for as sweet and gentle a creature she'd woken up with, it was the monster he was in the weeks prior that had brought her to the end of her rope. She shuddered to think of the way he'd glared at her, how he'd stolen Fang away; but cooled and relaxed to think of the kisses and whispers from that morning.

'Not the only kisses to think of today, Delle.'

How had that meeting gone? Would either man be bearing signs of a fight when she saw them next; a tiny part of her wondered if Simon would come back from it at all. He'd been reckless, embracing her so blatantly in the open; but she understood why he did it. Now, they were established; involved. If Negan tried to snatch her away now, it would give Simon reason to react; how he would react though, that was still a mystery. She frowned; she still wasn't certain Negan hadn't orchestrated the whole ambush, if he was just doing damage control and covering his ass at this point. Had it really been an assassination gone awry? As she reached the end of her braid she sighed; it would take talking to get these answers, and the new Negan was not accustomed to being questioned.

"Open up, Delle!" She was startled out of her thoughts by Negan's rough voice at her door; not the first person she was expecting, but she allowed him in nonetheless. His feathers ruffled to see her hair damp, realizing where she'd spent her time with Simon; but he forced it out of his mind. He couldn't just declare himself the better choice, he had to prove it to her. Stepping in he held his hands behind his back, leaning into her door.

"Get some answers?" She asked, setting against the foot of her bed, a metal crossbar.

"A lead, at least," he muttered, with a shake of his head. "Headin' to the Hilltop tomorrow to learn a little more. Feels like I'm playin' detective on this one."

"Not jealous of you there, Coach," she hummed while crossing her arms. "Anything I can do to help?" As complicated as their relationship was at the time, she wanted the truth as much as anyone else.

"About that," he grinned, ready to reveal his secret. "I want you with me when we go; so here." His arms left his back; one hand delicately cradling a very distinctive cross bladed machete.

"Fang!" She squeaked - she never squeaked - and shot across the room to sweep up her blade in her arms. She released him from his sheath, just enough to press the flat side, cold metal against her
cheek. The cool steel had her feeling whole almost immediately, like her brother had just taken her hand.

Negan's eyes crinkled with a smile, seeing a visible change in her body; she relaxed but seemed stronger, a happy glow in her cheeks. "You'll need 'im tomorrow. I need my little maniac at my side."

"You sure that's best?" Delle felt far from formidable in her current state; thinned, weary and coming off the heels of defeat didn't have her seeming like the stoic demon Negan needed.

"Absolutely, darlin'!" He was certain where she was not. "I... I haven't used you wisely. Keepin' you locked up on rooftops when there's a perfectly good hellion kickin' in there; downright stupid of me."

'At least he'll own up to that.' She was still swirling patterns across her weapon, gathering every stitch of herself his confiscation had pulled away. "Alright," she nodded, looking up to him. "Should be a fun excursion."

With a smile he nodded, but their conversation wasn't over. He had plans. "Now Delle," he started, his hands coming to rest on her upper arms. "I know you and the Big Bad Boss just had it out somethin' fierce, and I am sorry about that; but you're gonna have to deal with a gigantic fuck load of him. At least til we find out who pulled all this crap."

Her mouth formed an unhappy line; though she knew this was necessary. Whoever had attacked - if anyone had at all - were striking the mythic monster that Negan had made for himself; it only made sense that the monster would come out to play. "I know," she breathed. "I'll be alright. So long as I listen, keep my head down, I should be alright." 'When have I ever listened?'

"Well I don't want that either," he smiled knowingly; she waited for him to let her in on his scheme. "I want you to try it on for size; what I do. Be Negan for a minute."

"I want you to channel what makes me so effective and - let's face it - awesome. I know what a little spitfire you are," he smiled as she blushed. "Tomorrow I want you to show the world what a fucking badass you can be."

A part of her was nervous; she'd been beat down over the weeks past. She wasn't even sure she could pose as the awe inspiring tyrant much less act like him, do what he did. "...you really sure I'm ready?" She wondered. His guidance was something she'd missed and now needed again.

"Without a damn doubt," he nodded with a grin. "You can be a force of nature, and I know how fierce you are in protecting what's yours," his eyes flicked to Fang, then back to her. "Mamma bear's got to keep the cubs safe; sometimes that means bearin' those teeth and clawin' up some assholes. You have that in you; I know it. I've seen it."

'Do I still?' She hadn't felt protective over much but her blade since its namesake had died; and that was born out of love. She didn't think she could do the same with anger. "I don't know if I feel that strongly about the Sanctuary," she mumbled. "No offense."

He frowned, but gave an understanding nod. "You're used to defending out of love, out of survival," he stepped towards her, eyes locked together. "But trust me, you can be just as effective when you
do it out of rage," his palm flattened against her clothed belly, thumb stroking the fabric as his touch seared. "Take that fire in your belly and burn every last motherfucker who crosses us to the ground."

"Us?" Her eyes flicked between his hand and his face. She had plenty of fury to feed off of; years worth of oppression, isolation and underestimation meant she constantly ran hot. Maybe this way she could release it, use it to her benefit - if she could control it. "I might get a little stab-happy," she admitted. "I've never met these guys; I don't know if I can curb my heat if I have to."

"You did it with those dickwad Kingdom archers," he offered; he had a point. "You made your mark; nobody fucks with Delle, nobody crosses Sanctuary. It was elegant as shit; could've fell to my knees and ate your pussy out right then and there, the way you handled yourself." His words sent a shock wave through to her center; her devils begged her to tell him to prove it, get to his knees - but it wasn't the right time.

"Gee, thanks," she chuckled, her thumb drawing across Fang's edge; it split her first few layers of skin and she wondered if he'd had him sharpened. "They hurt me though; it was personal. What if I can't do it without that?"

"Oh sweetheart," he purred, his hand gliding up her arm. "They did hurt you; this is personal."

"What the fuck does that mean?"

"Who are you, Delle? Who is everyone who lives here?" His brows raised, waiting.

"We are Negan." Of all his rules, that one was the easiest to follow, the simplest to fake when she didn't feel the least bit like him.

"Good girl," he growled and she nearly fell back on her bed. "When someone hurts one, they hurt me; they hurt us all. I am one massive superpower, and if someone thinks they can come into my house and fuck with my shit - I'm going to get pretty fucking angry," he leaned into her space, nearly nose to nose. "So how you feelin', Delle? Are you angry?"

His eyes were dark fire; warmth like embers flickering in his irises, that devil's grin on his lips; madness was a resource as much as anything else in their world, and he would teach her to mine it. "I am Negan," she chirped, a confident smirk on her mouth. "And I am fucking pissed."

With a laugh he slid his hand to her head, pulling her tight to his chest; at their heights her face pressed into his leathers and she was engulfed in his scent, wrapped up in memory. "That's my girl," he muttered, kissing at her hair. He wished he could stay, but there were plans to be made. "Sleep; we've got a big day tomorrow."

They were leaving on a high note - Delle had Fang back, Negan was genuinely happy - but a question burned in her throat, one she needed answered if she was going to sleep at all. "Negan?"

"Yeah, sweetheart?"

She gulped but never looked away. "You didn't... is... did you kill Simon?"

His expression didn't waver despite his heart breaking and a knot forming in his stomach. 'Bide your time, win her over.' "Ask him yourself when you see him tomorrow," he reached out and ruffled her hair. "He's fine; he's comin' with us to see how to handle shit right."
"Oh," she felt relief, gladness; but was that also disappointment? "Good; that he's alive."

"Peachy, isn't it?" Negan couldn't help a little edge in his tone there; he'd never been all that patient. "Get some rest. Tomorrow we crack some skulls."

As he walked his halls back to his personal chambers, he whistled a joyous tune; it'd be a longer game, but he'd have Delle yet. He'd scared her with the full force of his new self, when he should've been showing her how to bring the same out in her; that power, that evil was addictive. It'd take time, but soon he would have her craving it. The power. The evil. Him; in every version. She'd never be scared of him again.

Chapter End Notes

It felt so weird not posting yesterday!! But I got some words sorted and storyboarded today so we should be good for awhile :)

Were close to the main story now guys!

Like my writing? Leave me a comment!! I love hearing from all of you and your words, critiques and theories keep me inspired and writing :) ❤️❤️❤️❤️
Chapter 58

Before...

There was no room for 'this isn't what it looks like' or 'let me explain'. It was all too plain, all too real; Delle stood there, side by side with her very married lover, staring at her brother not ten feet away, seeing the truth they'd been keeping from him. There was nowhere to hide.

"Eric..." Delle breathed his name just loud enough to hear; this wasn't the time for nicknames. She started slow, carefully; what her sibling had seen could bring their world, her relationship crashing down around her. *Because that's what you deserve, Delle.*

"W-wh...Delle what is this?" His voice was hoarse, like his throat was raw; he was so confused, shock and embarrassment shooting through his body. "What did you do?"

Her palms were clammy, her heart racing a mile a minute; she didn't dare look to Negan, as much as she wanted to. Involving him at this point would only make things worse. "I... we..."

Fang blinked, nonplussed; all his worries and suspicions were suddenly confirmed, and it felt like ice water poured directly on his brain. "Are you... you two...?" He could only look at Delle; couldn't bring himself to meet the eye of his Coach, his mentor, his idol.

With a long pause Delle swallowed down her tears and terror. "...yes. We are." She watched as her brother's body faltered, stumbling back and his hand flying to his mouth. The truth hit him like a freight train and was more than a challenge to process.

"How... when did this happen?" He muttered, glancing back the way he'd come; the last thing they needed was more of an audience.

"Three months--"

"Closer to four," *Negan shut your fucking mouth you're only gonna make him angrier!* Delle's silent orders did nothing to stop his talking. "It... it happened at the bar. Wasn't a plan or anything."

He could only stare, trying to keep himself from decking the so-called authority figure. His fists clenched he returned the conversation to Delle. "How could you!? He's married!"

"She didn't know," all Negan wanted was to defend her, stick up for her in whatever way he could. "I... by the time she found out, things got..." His eyes softened when they landed on Delle, making note of her panicked shivering. "...complicated."

His body felt like it was full of insects, clawing their way out from in; his vision seemed red with fury. He was trying to quell it, but it seemed he'd been born with the legendary Cornish temper after all. "Complicated!?" He repeated in a scoff. Delle took a step towards him, recognizing the oncoming signs of an explosion.
"E-Eric let's go home, we can talk about this--" she stammered, taken aback as he started marching forward.

"You lied to me, Delle!" His voice broke when he spoke the truth; that hurt the worst. No matter what trouble either of them had been in, they could always go to the other in honesty; that was broken now, his trust damaged. "You've been with him this whole time!? How could... you could've told me!"

"No," she gasped, a lump forming in her throat. "I couldn't... This-this has to be secret."

"What do you mean, 'has to be'?" What was this present tense bullshit she was spouting. "You-- you can't seriously be thinking of letting this go on!"

Distraught, she finally looked to Negan, finding a little strength in his expression; it was scared too, but confident, committed. He wasn't leaving her side. "We..." What could she say? 'We love each other,' she found herself thinking - but it felt too late to use the truth for him. 'I've never felt like this before.'

"I can't believe you'd do this, Delle," her brother continued with his baffled tirade. "He's married -- he's your teacher! O-or was, god...if this got out--"

"--it won't get out," Negan took a step forward; he couldn't have Fang spilling the beans, couldn't imagine being without her when he'd finally won her heart. "We're careful. Nobody knows but you; noone else has to know," he dared to reach for Delle, a bad move. "Nobody has to get hurt here--"

Oh but someone did; a loud thump, a sharp sting and Negan was sent reeling, clutching at his bloodied mouth. The second his fingertips brushed Delle's skin, Fang had cracked him across the jaw.

Time seemed to stop; Delle looked up to her brother, seething and shuddering with rage, then to Negan, staring at the blood on his hand transfered from his mouth. Twin bruises were already beginning to bloom on her lover's face and her brother's hand. This is what you get for sneaking around. Sleeping with a married man. Being a whore.'

"Don't you touch my fucking sister!" Fang's tone surprised even himself, roiling and ready to fight. Delle was shocked; she'd never even heard him swear before. Negan shared a similar sentiment, gawking at his young student. His jaw throbbed with pain, not undeserved, and somehow dulled by the absurdity of the moment.

"Fang, I--"

"--you don't get to talk right now!" The boy growled to his coach; if he was even still a student there. "I told you not to hurt her! You don't deserve her, you-- you fucking pervert!" He was getting an affinity for cussing.

'I know I don't.' Negan admitted within before speaking. "Hurting Delle is the last thing I want to do--"

"Good! Then stay the hell away from her!" Fang shoved against his teacher, happy to fight further if he had to.

"Eric," His name pleaded from his sister's lips, now trembling as tears rolled down her cheeks. "Eric
please. Let's go home." He'd never heard her sound so small, defeated. He gave Negan one last look, knuckles white with anger before he took Delle's hand, dragging her from Negan.

"Stay the fuck away!" Was the last thing he heard the boy call as their footsteps faded, the dull thump of the dance pulsing against the floor where Negan stood, wondering, hoping, praying she still loved him.

Fang was eerily silent the entire ride home, though his body practically radiated rage; it wasn't until they were safely inside their apartment, assured their father wasn't home, that he went off.

"WHAT THE HELL, DELLE!?!" He boomed in anger; the room seemed to vibrate with tension. 'Let him yell, I've earned this.' She let her stare fall to the floor, taking her punishment. "What the hell were you thinking!? Negan!? Fucking Negan!?’

She sighed, running her hands over her face before formulating an answer. "I... I don't know what to tell you," she murmured. "I really didn't know he was married; not at first."

"Even if he wasn't, he was your teacher! That's so creepy!" Fang shuddered in disgust.

"You can't help what you like," she said with a shrug; younger men never really worked for her, not the way Negan did. "And then we were at the bar, and we were closed... we got kind of drunk... and it just... happened. By the time I learned the truth I just...I liked him. 'I love him.'"

Fang surpressed the urge to vomit, leaning against the arm of their couch. "You're blaming this on alcohol? God you're starting to sound like dad," the look she gave him made him regret his wording immediately - there was no greater insult. "I...I didn't mean that. You're not him. But just--why continue after? Once you found out about the wife, why not just stop?"

'Because it was deeper than just stopping. I was already falling for him like an idiot.' She couldn't tell him that; not then, not after what he'd seen. "It wasn't that easy," she whispered, scared to see his expression. "I... by the time you told me he was married, it..." 'Do it Delle; be the bad guy. It's what he needs.' "Guess I figured it couldn't be undone... there was no worse it could be."

Fang couldn't believe his ears; Delle had always been unconventional, but she'd never willfully ruined someone's life, lived so carelessly. "That's..." he was dumbstruck. He loved his sister, but this was the first time he didn't respect her. "That's the worst thing I've ever heard."

It stabbed through her to see him so disappointed; she'd seen that emotion on him before, but this was the worst thing she'd ever done, and his face matched. "I'm not exactly proud of myself, Eric - I never expected to end up like this."

'A slut, a whore, an adulterer, a mistress?' Her better angels were doubled over in righteous laughter.

'In love.'

Her brother ran a hand through his hair while the other loosed his coat, his tie. "That's not an excuse, Delle! I mean... did he force you or something?"
"No!" As terrible the circumstances were, the suggestion that the man she loved would rape her was maddening. "Nothing like that; he wouldn't do that."

He leant her a pained expression. "How do you know, Delle?" A conversation with someone looking at her relationship was poking holes in their love every which way. "What do you even know about him? Do you think he'll leave his wife or something?"

She hadn't considered it; though given the state of Negan's marriage she suspected it may happen sooner rather than later. She found herself odd, realizing she didn't care whether or not he did - she'd never grown up around conventional, healthy relationships, but she didn't feel herself needing the ring to be his. She was just his, all on her own. The fact that they sat at the precipice of ruining each other's lives and those around them was more where she was aching. "I don't expect that." Were the few words she chose to say.

He simply stared at her, eyes hardened and unfamiliar; she felt like she was looking at a stranger. With a shake of his head he carried himself to his room, leaving her to do the same with her own. The tears fell freely, slicking off her cursed dress, shame filling her as it fell from her body and left her bare - she'd almost forgotten Negan tearing off her underwear, the intense and fiery love making - that was the name she'd refused to say - and her final admission of emotion. She'd been flying so high, body and heart fulfilled and fed on him when her wings were clipped, plummeting down to reality at the sight of her brother. Things had changed in an instant; if only her heart would turn so easily.

She slipped off her heels and threw on an oversized shirt as she heard rustling from the living room, then the front door opened - only to slam the next second. She stepped out of the room and found a note on the back of the couch.

- Going to Tony's. Call tomorrow.
  -Eric

Her tears stained the paper as she cried, alone in her home but feeling so unwelcome. She spent the night curled up in her bed, sobbing, lamenting her heart and it's unyielding nature; it had been allowed to love and wasn't going to stop.

At one point her phone flickered with the light of a text; she grabbed it up praying it was Eric, but found Negan instead.

12:49 - I am so sorry, Delle. I love you. Did you and Fang talk? Can I call you? Are you okay? -

She turned her phone off and rolled over into a fitful, broken sleep.

Chapter End Notes

And just like that everyone is sad again :D

How're we feeling about the story thus far, folks? All opinions welcome!

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! I love hearing from you all and it really helps keep
me on track and writing!♡♡♡♡
She was glad to see Simon alive and safe - for the time being - as she joined their small convoy in the main yard of Sanctuary. Negan had selected a few extra hands to join them on their outing; a few low level workers with some extra muscle, Arat, Gavin and Wade. Negan liked a hefty team when he was on his way to prove a point.

"Wow, no iron marks! Who's dick did you have to suck to get away with that pretty face?" Delle teased Simon, coming up behind him and making him jump; he was wound pretty tight.

"Heh; we'll see if I'm still this handsome when we're done out there." He was anxious, reaching out an arm to pull her close and kissing her forehead.

"We'll find out what's what, Si. Once we know who did all this, we'll come down on them like hell on earth," she pressed a kiss just under his jaw, where she knew he liked it. "It'll be okay."

"Let's roll out, folks!" They both turned to see their warlord, grinning like a wolf from the raised stair; he acted like he was going on vacation, whistling and swinging Lucille like a cane. He gave Simon a quick nod as he passed, the look in his eye no less threatening. "Delle, come on."

She'd accepted the long standing rule that she would ride with Negan; it'd been tradition since the cannery, and this didn't seem like the time to break the norm. She gave Simon's hand a squeeze - something Negan noticed - before heading to his personal truck, a behemoth of a pick up. She laid Fang across the dashboard while climbing in before repositioning the machete in her lap. Negan was still giving orders, explaining the play of the day; Hilltop was a ways to go so they were expected to be quick, in and out. A herd was reported along one of the roadways and Negan wanted to miss it if he could.

"Lookin' tough as nails, Delle," Negan grinned as he plopped into the drivers seat, still jaunty and maybe even excited. "Red always brings out the ass kicker in your eyes." He chuckled and revved his engine, rolling out for their destination.

She'd chosen her own regalia for the day; black denim and red leather, a dark scarf knotted at her throat. She was an inversion on Negan's own look, and if one didn't know better they'd have looked like they were in uniform. "Think I wear it better, you fucking geezer." She gave a tight smile, still a little unnerved with her mission of the day - 'be Negan for a minute.' She wasn't sure yet how to channel the man that had almost pushed her to death, only that rage was key.

"Feely antsy?" He raised a brow in her direction; he knew that look.

"Just not sure how to be you, just yet," her Negan impression would include plenty of cussing, but
she was used to that. She needed to figure out her actions. "Kept tryin' to do that little lean back you
do; don't think I've got the knees for it."

"It's a gift," he snickered, turning off to a less used road in hopes of avoiding the undead masses.
"You're over thinking. Don't try and discipline like I do, do it like you would; once you've got that
down it'll be a cakewalk."

She nodded but wasn't satisfied. "What if I can't control the anger?"

"I'll step in," Negan reached over and squeezed her thigh, hard enough to center her and pull her
back into the moment. "You're gettin' your panties in a twist for nothing; you've got this,
sweetheart."

She gulped, but felt a little better to have a backup plan. She glanced into the passenger side mirror,
the second vehicle crammed with the remainder of their team. She swore she could see Simon
glaring red at the truck she rode in; or was it just at Negan? So far as she knew, he hadn't been made
aware of her strange audition for the day; she wondered how Simon would react if she managed to
inspire fear.

It was a long drive til Hilltop; plenty of time to stew.

The man who greeted them at the gates of the lesser community was one Delle had seen before; long
pin straight hair and a beard didn't mar his challenging, rebellious eyes. The way he stared at their
convoy, Delle was surprised Negan hadn't taken him out on his glare alone. The trucks parked just
within the walls, Negan leading the way with a wide, domineering stride to the long haired young
man.

"Jesus!" Negan bellowed. 'Right, Jesus,' Delle could remember Simon calling him that when they'd
stopped there, when she was first captured. 'That was so long ago.' "How ya been, kid? Heal any
lepers lately?"

"Offering isn't due til next week, sir," Oh Jesus had a temper on him; the way he said sir sounded
more like a cuss than a term of respect. "Why are you here?"

"Whoo-ee, Jesus you need to work on that tone; turn the other cheek, messiah," Negan whistled,
bringing Delle and Simon to a stop on either side of him. "Is it so hard to believe I'm just here for a
friendly visit?" Jesus didn't respond, simply glancing between Negan and Simon, his brow raising
slightly at Delle; he could almost recognize her, but couldn't place from where.

Negan rolled his eyes, Lucille balancing on his shoulder. "You're such a wet blanket -- I'm here for
your boss. Where's Gregory?"

Jesus brow knit together and Delle swore she could see beads of sweat on his forehead; maybe he
knew more than he let on, too. "He's up in his office. I can get him--"

"--Naw, I'll let myself in. Make it a surprise," he tipped his head to Jesus, already walking away with
his lieutenant and Delle in tow. "Arat and the boys are gonna keep you company, have a little chat;
be nice if you were feelin' talkative." Delle glanced back at the Saviors surrounding the so-called
Jesus. 'Bet he's praying for a miracle.'
Gregory was less of a man than Delle had been expecting; old, balding and surprisingly well fed for living in the apocalypse, he dressed like an office manager with a bootlicking personality to match. His beady eyes darted around as sweat poured over his brow like he had something to hide; which he did. Whatever secrets he held didn't keep him from leering like a fox at a hen when he set eyes on Delle.

"Negan! To what do I owe the honors?" Perhaps he'd been a politician with the slimy grin he had on his face. He greeted Simon just the same, with bribed diplomacy; but that tone changed when he looked to Delle. "And who is this pretty young thing?"

Simon's expression darkened and he moved to take hold of her, but Negan's hand pressed him back; he needed a little levity. It had been too long since he'd seen some honest entertainment, and seeing Gregory trying to get friendly with Delle - it promised something truly hilarious. After all, god help the man who underestimates Delle Cornish.

"I'm Delle." She grunted, arms crossed tight, mouth unsmiling. The little rat was already rubbing her the wrong way.

"It's a true treat to meet you," he sneered, extending a hand as though to shake; but when she took it he turned it quickly, planting a wet kiss on her knuckles. It almost earned him a punch from the same fist. "Negan, you didn't tell me you were bringing a wife with you!"

Delle yanked her hand back, an obstinate glare in her eye, teeth grinding together. "Excuse me?"

Negan laughed long and loud, thumbing away a tear in his eye. "Delle there is a free agent; no man's tyin' that little bronco down." He glanced back to Simon who looked ready to kill; he didn't know Delle like he thought he did.

"Maybe she hasn't met the right man," Gregory's slim, mean eye winked and Delle nearly gagged. "You know a smile wouldn't hurt, cupcake."

Before Delle could pull Fang free and cleave the Hilltop leader in half, Negan cleared his throat. "Let's get down to business, Gregory! Best we talk in your office," he leaned in close, Gregory's cheap cologne stinging his nose. "Time sensitive shit today."

Gregory sobered; trying to pull every excuse he could from the air. With a different opponent, he might've wormed his way free; but not that day.

Stood in his garish, ornate office Negan dispensed with false pleasantries before getting to the meat of the conversation. He'd taken up a seat on the edge of Gregory's desk, the measly old man cowering on the other side.

"So," Negan began, Lucille rolling from side to side with the push of his fingers across the polished wood desk. "A little birdie with a mustache tells me I demanded your head for having a shit crop to offer the last two months."

The head of Hilltop blinked, wringing his hands before replying. "T-that might've been mentioned," his gaze fell to Simon; if looks could kill Gregory would be dead and buried. "I-I mean I figured we were just joking, screwing around..."

"Don't go assuming shit with us," Negan ordered, Lucille stilling. "I might be a regular goddamn
"Of course Negan, sir," Gregory sputtered, his gaze unwilling to meet his. Delle decided if the man had ever owned a spine he'd lost it years ago; probably long before the dead rose and the world turned sour. "I'll be sure to clarify next time. Won't happen again."

"Fantastic," Negan stood and crossed his arms; he wasn't close to done. "Because I'm a little hurt, Greg! I thought you knew me better than that - I mean does it sound like me to ask my men to collect your head while I sit on my ass? Hell no - I'm a hands on kind of guy."

"R-right, of course," the slimy old rat gave a nod and a thin, tight smile. "How silly of me."

"Because I don't even mind that you're a little short lately; I know you'll more than make up for it next round, and the Sanctuary is fuckin' flush right now," he chuckled, throwing his arms out to either side; they settled on Gregory's desk, Negan glowering over the seated wimp. "Do you want to guess what I do mind, Gregory?"

The subordinate licked his lips, a crooked, forced smile on his face. "I-I'm sure I don't know... maybe you could clarify?"

Negan roared with a laugh, leaning back with a quick dip. "Oh he's got wisecracks now!" He thrust Lucille forward to point while turning his head to Simon. "Is he always such a riot?"

It was the first time Negan seemed to count on Simon since he'd returned; he made the most of it. "He's got his moments," he replied, letting a grin thicken on his face. "A real joker when he gets going." Simon could intimidate with the best of them; it was his temper that tripped him up.

"I'll have to have you try your best material sometime, Greg," Negan grinned like a wolf as he continued. "No, what really bites my balls is betrayal."

Gregory went white as a sheet; he knew exactly what Negan was talking about, but he wouldn't turn over so easily. Not with his own neck on the line. "I-I can guarantee you nobody at the Hilltop has betrayed you--"

"--now don't lie to me, pal! I'd never lie to you. I'm just asking for the truth. I mean, we've given you months of protection, peace; you been enjoying that?" He laughed as Gregory nodded hurriedly. "I betcha have. Now you know I'm fair, reasonable, but gettin' some fuckin' group to whack my whole outpost on your goddamn whim? That - that will not fucking fly, Gregory."

"W-what!? We would-- I'd never-- the Hilltop is loyal to you, Negan!" Gregory's lies were terrible but he wouldn't stop spouting them, interspersed with nervous laughter. If anything he was digging himself a deeper grave.

"Is that right?" He marvelled, letting himself slump into a chair before the desk, motioning Simon to do the same. "Somehow I fucking doubt that - so I'm going to let Delle here do the askin' - hard to say no to a pretty face," Her ears perked at her name, glancing to her two superiors. "We'll see if you still feel like lyin' after that."

Delle smiled and dipped her head, withdrawing Fang from his sheath; he glinted in the sunlight at Gregory's back, slowly setting. "Hi, Gregory," she sang, her voice a little higher than usual. "You know I've been here before?"
He stared at the girl as she swayed around the edge of his desk, just a foot from him now; more than enough room for that blade to swing and chop. "H-have you?"

She nodded, a sweet grin on her lips. "I have. This was the first community I ever saw, since the whole world fucked off. I was awestruck; I imagined this god of a man having created such a paradise, where people lived, thrived," that grin formed a pout. "Imagine my disappointment."

Gregory looked aghast; a product of a bygone era where women didn't talk back, he had to bite back the urge to argue. Negan and Simon shared a snicker, watching their girl work.

"And then I got to Sanctuary; what a world! Negan there--" she gestured with Fang. "That's the kind of man who builds worlds back up. Simon keeps the cogs turning; like you!" She jabbed her free hand into his shoulder for added effect. "I never even dreamed I'd see a civilization like his before. Never thought I'd see people gettin' their shot at normal lives."

Gregory yelped as Delle shoved her Fang against the back of his chair; the curved edge pressed into the material of his jacket, tearing a few threads. "And now we find out some fucking low down coward sends a goddamn kill squad to off our people -- how am I supposed to feel about that, Gregory?" She raised her brows, tilting her head to one side. "Because let me tell you; so far, I'm feelin' fucking livid."

Gregory's eyes were like saucers, matching the gape of his mouth; this young woman was audacious and twisted, as if Negan had carved her out of bone and steel himself. "I-I don't know what happened," he was almost beginning to believe his own lies. "I swear, we'd never betray the Sanct--"

"Not big on lies either, old man!" Like lightning she was behind his chair, Fang's edge pressed life threateningly close to his Adam's apple. "Now then, cupcake; you're gonna sing the right notes and maybe I don't rip out your voice box."

"Steady, Delle." Negan said it more to frighten Gregory than to reprimand her; she was still in control, and she was handling beautifully.

"Come on, Gregory, spill the beans," she murmured, letting the razor thin blade break a few layers of skin; he let out a pathetic whimper, straightening his spine. "Would be a shame to get all that blood all over this nice desk - that shit will not come out."

"N-Negan please, control your woman!" It was almost as though he wanted to get beheaded; Delle let the blade nick further, a minor trickle of red flushing from a slowly opening wound.

"Think she's doin' fine on her own, Gregory!" He laughed, setting Lucille between his legs to rest his palms on her hilt. "You know how to make her stop. Tell her the truth."

"I really don't know anything!" He exclaimed.

"Hm; so content with lying. Oh well, say good night Gregory." She sighed, pulling Fang back a hair to gain some leverage, starting to swing forward---

"-- wait wait wait!! Okay I'll talk!!" Delle slid from behind his chair, Fang falling dutifully at her side. "N-No need to lose any heads today."

"Glad we jogged your memory," Negan spoke sarcastically. "Now squawk, bird."
Gregory glanced to Delle before looking back to Negan. "There was a group; Jesus found them while scouting. I didn't want anything to do with them! B-but they... they said they'd make life easier on us..." He'd always jump at the chance of an easier life. "J-Jesus was really gung ho for them, and then...p-please don't kill me."

Negan stared hard at the little man; this was his first act of insubordination, and with Delle's little act of terror he guessed it'd be his last. Better to have a pliant underling under your boot then a possible rebel. "Alright Gregory; you're not off scott free, but you get to keep breathing for another day," he stood straight, eyes a storm. "But I want a name. What does this merry band of assholes call themselves?"

"The Alexandrians. I can show you where their base is."

They had the intel they'd come for; the location of this new community called Alexandria highlighted in bright red on a rural map. Delle stared at the red spot as they left the mansion Gregory called home, the man a puddle of sweat and weakness as they departed.

"A smile wouldn't hurt, cupcake." Delle had quipped as they began their route back to their vehicles.

"Don't think I've ever seen Gregory shit his pants quite like that!" Negan guffawed, leaning against the door of his truck. Delle was saying her goodbyes to Simon before he returned to his own vehicle; he'd wanted desperately to kiss her, but she had protested, saying the Hilltop didn't need to know how close they were. Enemies everywhere. "You did good, you little monster."

"Learned from the best," she chuckled with a wink as she crossed to the passenger side door; it was nearly past dusk and the ride home would be through pitch darkness. Terrible things can happen in the dark. "It was... interesting."

'Oh I know that voice,' Negan's smile was wicked in his heart. 'She's hooked.'

Chapter End Notes

Fuck you, Gregory!

Hahaha this was so fun to write, especially coming off that last chapter.

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! Your words keep me going and inspire my writing! ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 60

Chapter Notes

Get ready for adults acting like reasonable adults :D

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The ride back to Sanctuary would take up most of the night; as hungry as Simon seemed to go after the compound that had offed his men, Negan knew better. The right assault would take planning, scouting; it'd need to be done quickly, but it could be done. "Can't go running in half cocked," Negan had said. "Not that I ever am."

That's what had Delle and Negan barreling down a rural road in the dead of night, headlights of the convoy truck shining behind them. Delle was tired, without any doubt; but Negan was electrified.

"That," he grinned, talking about her act with Gregory, how his greedy eyes had bulged out of his head at her devilish nature. "Was fuckin' majestic, sweetheart!"

She smirked and nodded, despite her fatigue; as it turned out, letting the rage form into power felt good.

No, not good.

Exhilarating.

"Surprised he didn't piss himself," she murmured, rubbing an eye with the heel of her hand. "Got to try harder next time."

"Oh I can't fuckin' wait! I'm bringin' popcorn next time, that was a knock out performance," he watched as her mouth stretched wide in a yawn, tears pricking the edges of her eyes. "All that ass kicking leave you bushed, beautiful?"

She glanced over to him; she could say no but her body's telltale signs wouldn't be denied. "Evil takes energy, apparently," she pinched her cheeks in an effort to stay awake. "Don't know how you do it 24/7."

"It's not 24/7," he clarified, raising an index finger off the steering wheel. "And you're still a rookie; eventually it'll make you feel like you're fucking flying, not drain you." She wondered if that was true; Negan seemed to fall into his necessary evils so effortlessly, simple as breathing. The dichotomy of his two selves surprised her less, as she was beginning to understand how his mind and morals had changed to save everyone he could. Sure, the wicked son of a bitch that ruled the Sanctuary was a part of him now; that much was clear. But in these moments of privacy, just the two of them, he was almost the Negan she remembered.

Not that it got her any closer to trusting him again.

Another yawn prompted her muscles to stretch, her arms going taut and her back arching; Negan
was quick to glance at her breasts threatening to bust her jacket's zipper. "Y'know you could sneak a nap, if you're feelin' so inclined," he offered, letting his spare arm drift across the vinyl upholstery. "We've got miles til we're back at Sanctuary."

She mulled over the suggestion, trying to decide if his eyes were faking innocence - they often were. "Pretty sure if Simon saw us all cosied up together he'd have a conniption fit."

'Simon can mind his fucking business or he can get his dick sliced off and his balls shoved down his throat--' Negan stilled his demons, breathing deep.

'We're not going to get anywhere with her like that.'

"Last I checked you're your own woman," Delle's neck nearly snapped in whiplash with how fast she turned to Negan. "Even if half the time you have the worst fucking taste in men, he can't stop you from doin' shit."

Delle gawked; this time her eyes were saucers, baffled by Negan's words. They were so autonomous, so... progressive. 'What's he playing at?"'I...I guess yeah." With one more reassuring grin and a confident jerk of his head, she relented, sliding over the padded bench into the crux of his arm; his body like a heater made for her, her hair against his shoulder his favorite scent. If not for unknown fates that deemed it otherwise, it would've felt normal.

They spent a few hundred yards in silence, Negan wishing for a radio to fill the void; but as in so many similar situations before, it was his voice that broke the quiet. "Can I ask you somethin'?"

Her eyes had closed, focusing on remembering how his chest and shoulder muscles shifted beneath her cheek; but they opened slightly, waiting. "Go on."

"Why...Why'd you pick Simon?" He had been dying to ask, but any time he thought about the question he felt like killing something. It was only her proximity, her body against his, that calmed murderous nerves.

She hummed, pressing her mouth together tightly for a moment; she was wary of how he could react, the rooftop fresh in her memory. "I... I like him, I guess," with the digging of his digits into her arm she elaborated. "Not like 'fall in love happily ever after' or some shit like that. I just... I wanted sex, and he's someone I trust." That was true; Simon had gathered her faith over time, Negan had expected it by sheer virtue of their history. Even if Simon was being a boorish alpha male at the time, she still trusted him.

He sighed, grumbling but loosening his grip. "I get the need to nut, doll," he surrendered, glancing into the rear view mirror. "But you know you could've come to me for that. I know what you like."

He winked down at her and she shuddered inwardly - he did indeed know her backwards and forwards. He was warmth, nostalgia, home; but she couldn't place her convictions in him, not again. Not yet.

"Negan be honest; you really think you could let it just be sex?" Her bright eyes, tired and soft, blinked up at him; the truck slowed as he let himself drown in her gaze, taking in the dark hair, soft pink lips and curious expression of the woman he loved.

"No," he admitted, his shoulders dropping as he let out a breath he didn't know he was holding. "You got me there, Delle."
It hurt her to hear him say it; Negan had tried once to make it only physical, to simplify it into using each other's bodies to feed one another, but that had failed and he'd fallen hard. He'd never lost his love for her, even at their worst; but she couldn't ask him to take it back to that carnal plain again. It was one thing Negan just wasn't capable of.

"I just... I needed a reminder. That I'm alive, that I'm not just a corpse-to-be. Simon does that for me," she let her lips curl up in a smile at the thought of him. "I can't be in love, not anymore; it's... "it's hurt too much in the past, say it!" "It's better this way."

Negan stilled, just driving along with the dead dark ahead, illuminated inch by inch by their headlights. He was in for a long game, he knew that; but damn if he wasn't ashamed of himself. He could tell Delle didn't love anymore because of him; their fire had burned brightly but had almost swallowed them both whole. He knew this well, but he also knew something about feeling alive when surrounded by the dead. Power was key; the kind he held, the kind he'd fed to Delle that day. She'd called it 'interesting' but what stirred in her was a craving, a thirst for more - he had no doubts in that fact. 'Show her how alive she can be without him; then work on the love.'

"I'd check in with the lanky bastard then," Negan advised, letting his knuckles stroke her arm. "The guy's been actin' awful possessive since he got back. Like he thinks I'm gonna steal you away," he glanced down to her and his demons purred at the blush in her cheeks. "Hell surprised he didn't ask you to go steady or something."

"I know, it's been a bit much," Delle agreed with a wrinkle in her nose. They'd only had a handful of encounters before his banishment, but he seemed to be operating under the 'sex equals relationship' idea; Delle needed to set him straight. "I...I'm sorry you had to deal with that, seeing me with him. I know you must want to pound us into meat dust."

His chest rumbled with a laugh. "Only a little," he took a chance and leaned his cheek against the top of her head, relaxing as she didn't pull away. "Tell him to keep it in his pants. Have a feelin' you got a tighter hold on those balls than I do lately."

"I'll work on 'im." It was all so incredibly surreal; a world populated by the dead, curled under her ex lover-turned-warlord's arm, discussing her fuck buddy. It was the strangest thing to happen to Delle since she first saw a corpse stand and walk. 'How did it all turn out this way?' She wondered, as sleep wrapped it's lazy tendrils around her mind; her mind slipped into dreams surrounded by a strong arm, a warm scent and the promise of safety.

"Delle," her eyes were refusing open, the comfort of her surroundings too appealing to let go of sleep just yet. "Shake a leg, doll; almost back home," Her body squirmed, realizing she'd slipped down into his lap while asleep; her lashes fluttered as her vision focused on his amused expression, his bare hand in her hair. "You know you talk in your sleep, now."

It woke her attention, eyes snapping wide and her body flying up in the seat. "I do not." She mumbled stubbornly, massaging her face with her fingertips to free herself from the last particles of slumber.

"Oh, you do," he chuckled, the gates of Sanctuary coming into view. "You were muttering about
She shrunk away from him, heat filling her cheeks; what had happened, how she'd lost him was still a secret from Negan, and she wasn't certain if she was ready for him to know. "What... What'd I say?"

"You were callin' him a dumbass," he grinned, pulling into the yard while the remaining crew did the same. "Sounded like the night he got that nickname."

As he described her words her dreams had matched; it had been hazy but there he'd been, bleeding and smiling. Negan too, younger, righteous and significantly less leather coated. She nodded as the truck came to a stop, engine ceasing. "Checks out," she admitted, tossing her eyes to his while she pulled the machete into her arms. "Uh... I'm gonna try n' catch up with Si, get on the same page..."

"Yeah, best to," 'maybe they'll split up and she'll come diving into bed with me,' He thought hopefully. 'Stranger things have happened.' "I... I miss that kid, y'know; Fang," his brows upturned as he allowed some genuine sadness into his expression, his lips pursing. "He was a great kid."

"Sure was," she agreed, sliding out of the passenger side, just as Si was storming up the edge of the truck. She pressed her hand to his chest when he went to sweep her up, confusion and frustration on his face. "Hi, bean pole."

"Twisted," he said almost cordially; his hands reached for her but again, she resisted. "What's the matter?"

"We're due for a chat," she spoke quietly, listening as Negan's distinctive footsteps carried him from the trucks; Arat, Gavin and Wade followed as he called for them, plans to hatch. "Can we go up to your room?"

His face faltered, worried. "Fuck, what'd Negan tell you?" He seemed legitimately scared; it would've been sweet if it weren't so clingy. "Fuck what did he do?"

She huffed, her brows furrowing before she wrapped her fingers around the back of his neck, pulling his lips to hers. It was quick but firm, passionate, and she tried to ignore the spark of need that ignited with his hands on her hips. "Let's. Go. Talk." She demanded, pressing her forehead to his, eyes bewitching him into silent compliance.

The walk to Simon's room was quiet, only short greetings exchanged with a handful of guards before they reached his door. Delle waited til it shut before she began.

"So, Simon," she crossed her arms, watching his actions; he seemed to be caught between a punished child and an indignant prisoner. "About all this jealous bullshit."

It hadn't been what he was expecting; nor did he understand her reasoning. "What're you talking about?"

"You're kidding, right? Blatantly kissing me in front of half the Saviors, in front of our boss -- you know he's weirdly obsessed with me. I mean do you know the shit I got into because of your bruises?"

He swallowed; he knew something must've happened, but Negan had been giving him radio silence during their time apart. "I'm sorry I wasn't here for that; for you," he apologized, stepping closer to
her. "When I saw you again, I just..." he didn't finish, letting her arms wrap his torso.

"I know," she murmured, staring up at him. "I missed you too; but I'm not in this for some shmaltzy teenage love story - I don't want that," her mind eased as his face remained calm, fingers in her hair. "I want you because you make me feel good; and I trust you. Can you be okay with that?"

He dug his teeth into his lip; his eyes studied the beautiful young firecracker in his grasp. She'd all but said she wouldn't love him, but she trusted him; enough to let him exercise his deeper fantasies with her body. Could he live with that?

Why yes, yes he could.

"I think I can suffer through," he grinned, nuzzling into her neck, his whiskers tickling her skin. "I just have one request, Twisted."

The use of his special name for her tamed her ire a bit. "What's that?"

"Don't fuck Negan," his plea was unusual but not unbelievable; even if it was only in body, Delle choosing Simon was one thing he had that Negan didn't. "I don't want to sound like a bitchy boyfriend, n' I'm touched you picked me to rail you til you can't walk straight," she snickered and he smiled. "But don't fuck him...cool?"

Her hands cupped his cheeks, teeth going first for his lip before their mouths molded together, a hungrier, more expectant kiss than before. "Don't you worry," she said uncertainly; her mind hurried to shove aside Negan's fingers inside her, his kisses on her skin, his tongue on her tits. "Don't let this get back to him, but I don't trust him like I trust you. Doesn't matter how bad he wants in my pants, I don't want him," 'but you need him.' Her inner self implored; again she shook free the idea. "Now then, about railing me til I can't walk straight..."

He grinned and his limbs moved like lightning, arms hoisting her legs up around his waist, flexing tight to hold herself against his frame. "I did mention that didn't I?"

"Sure did," her hands ran from his hairline to the back of his scalp, tugging on his strands and creating a moan. "Put your money where your mouth is, bean pole." She squeaked as her back found his mattress, familiar but cool, his thick thighs straddling her hips. Deft, smooth fingers were unzipping her leather, tugging it free along with the scarf; the jacket he flung free, but the scarf stayed nearby.

"How's 'bout I put my mouth here instead?" He spoke low, breath fanning across her cheeks before lips met, tongues exchanging happy reunions in the other's mouths; his hands already had her shirt pushed up over her tits, her own digits clawing away at his clothes. She moaned against his tongue when those wide hands cupped her breasts, fingertips teasing her soft nipples into rosy toned pebbles, the odd pinch or drag of his nails making her writhe. "Mm patience, little lady; I'll get ya there."

"No visible marks this time," she insisted, working his buttons free from their holes she wanted his skin on hers. "Keep 'em where my clothes can hide 'em, got it?"

He dragged his teeth against her throat; not enough to mark, just enough to tease. "Ma'am, yes ma'am!" He smirked and shimmied downwards, tongue teasing her nipples while he did away with the fly of her jeans. She arched into his workings, teeth digging into her sweet buds and suckling on like his life depended on it.
"Ah your mouth is goddamn lethal, Si," she groaned and he grinned, freeing her legs from their denim casings, then her pussy from cotton confines; he did the same with his, cock already throbbing and jutting proudly from his groin. "Eager, huh?"

"Happy to please, my darling psycho," he murmured. "Close your eyes, baby; wanna try something." She looked at him warily, but shut her lids; only to feel a familiar knit wrap around her face, head.

"Whoa there, sport!" She sprang up in bed, though the knot was already tied. She wasn't a huge fan of losing that much control. "I'm not sure about this one..."

"Trust me, twisted," he purred, letting his hands slide down her body, seeking out the heat between her legs; she was half wet already and as two fingers slid inside, she nearly screamed. The subtraction of one of her senses caused a heightening in the remaining four; and touch was roaring to the forefront, her body clenching tightly with only a few prods and thrusts. "Not so bad, is it?"

She let her body fall back in place, glad to let him work a little magic on her; he had a talent in making her comfortable quickly. "Fucking perfect, mm..." she shivered, another finger sliding in while his other hand worked her clit, the bundle of nerves mashed under steady pressure. Her body was already starting to heat up, senses tuning to overwhelming sensations; the touch of his skilled hands, the sound of her wetness squelching around him, the taste of her own sweat as she licked her lips. "Mm, Si, please-- I need you to fuck me!"

"I will, sweetheart," even his voice was more exciting, deep and ragged from his lips. "Come for me once, like this; then I'll plow you into next week." He didn't have to work much harder for his goal; her walls were starting to cave around him, the intense pressure on her clit and sweetest spots was all encompassing. Clawing at his bedsheets and rolling her head back, she screamed his name as she found release, her body spasming with undiscovered shocks that she'd never felt prior. His fingers slowed, but didn't stop as she rode out every wave, crevice still twitching as he eventually, reluctantly pulled his hand away.

"Think all of Sanctuary heard you, Twisted," he snickered and felt him move, his body leaning to one side; she heard the movement of a drawer, the rustling and tearing of foil and plastic - the man was nothing if not prepared. A few more movements and he crawled over her, taking her hand to grasp his length; a few familiarizing strokes eased any worry she had, the unmistakable feel of rubber between their skin. "How do you want it tonight?" He asked in an innocent tone, an ironic juxtaposition as he sank himself into her warmth, burying in to the hilt inside her still aching sex. He kept his thrusts short, sharp at first, his body barely separating from hers before he snapped his hips back in, making her whine with every shove. "Quick n' dirty? Slow and sen-su-al?" He dragged out the last word, over enunciating as he dragged himself out to the tip, pushing back in so slow she could feel every contour of his manhood. "Or do you want me to make your eyes roll back and forget your name?"

She smiled; the darkness surrounding her eyes amped up her excitement, body on fire with the touch of his skin. "I'll take a number three, Si. No visible marks." She lost the last word in a moan, his mouth on her tits again, this time vicious little bites incorporated with sweet kisses, all while he pounded into her with lustful fervor; she seemed to squeeze him tighter with every plunge, sending him further up to heaven each time. His nails raked across her ribs - the midriff look was out for awhile - currents of electricity running down the marks, sizzling her from the outside in. She shrieked and did the same to his shoulder blades, her longer nails barely catching the sensation of something hot and wet on her fingertips.
"Oh sweet thing the way you scream," he was panting now; six weeks without her had damaged his stamina, trying to fight back the urge to come. "You're gonna mark me up too, Miss twisted?"

She smiled through a whimper, one of his hands moving to pull her hair taught, expose her neck; while the other hooked a thumb into her cheek, her tongue peeking out and coating his fingers in drool. "Goh' e'sited," he guessed she'd said 'got excited'- his fingers in her mouth didn't allow for perfect speech. "Fuh, Si, 'm close--!" He didn't need her words to tell him that; she was constricting around him like a python, trembles beginning to wrack her form. She'd been craving this as much as he had. He picked up his efforts, despite his own release nearing; he was dying to see her fall apart at his whim.

"That's it Delle, come; milk my fucking cock--!" He nearly lost it as her legs wrapped his hips, altering the angle just slightly and causing further pressure around the crown of his length; he growled into her skin, licking a long stripe from her collarbone up to the curve of her ear, nibbling the lobe. That change, plus the excited, rampant thrusts it inspired, were the final straw.

"Fuck-- fuck Simon, yes!" His name flew from her lips in praise as he brought her to orgasm again, arms and legs squeezing him hard; his musculature was all that tethered her to earth as her body shook, seeing stars behind her blindfold. Hers triggered his, muscles seizing up as his seed spilled into the barrier between them. He resisted the temptation to sink his teeth into her shoulder again, simply burrowing his face into the crook of her neck as they drifted down from their mutual highs.

"Mm..." she hummed happily, pressing a soft kiss into his hair, just over his ear. "That's just what I needed."

He chuckled against her neck, nipping lightly before pulling back; his fingers pushed up the scarf, her eyes crinkling at the fresh exposure. "Couldn't agree more," he agreed and pecked her lips. He grasped his base and pulled out, Delle stifling a laugh at the sight of the full, banana yellow condom around his dick. After disposal he curved his arms around her, kisses painting her cheeks. "You spendin' the night or is this a hit it and quit it type situation?"

She smiled. "Well, getting dressed would just take so long," she groaned sarcastically. "Might as well sleep here, commit to dressing when I've got my energy up."

"Smart girl." He kissed her forehead and settled beside her, drawing up his blanket from the foot of the bed - kicked downwards during their dalliance. He was out quickly, spent and satisfied; though Delle found herself awake. Thinking of the toe curling sex they'd had, yes, but dwelling more on the sheer pleasure of the mastery she'd tasted at the Hilltop, and the look in Negan's eyes when she'd had it. She'd seen it before, she knew it well; he was intensely proud, knowing it was his wickedness flowing through her. It left a strange feeling in her stomach that she didn't mind the truth of that; if she didn't know better she might've thought she reveled in it. Relished his rage, mingling with hers.

It was slow, snail slow; but her heart was beginning to change.

Chapter End Notes

I got a couple requests for a little more Simon smut, hopefully this works for ya ;) even if it doesn't let me know what you think!
Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! I love to hear from all of you and your words keep me writing fast! ♡♡♡♡

*might be cutting down on chapter lengths slightly, these things take ages to write and they are monsters :')*
Chapter 61

Chapter Notes

Merry Christmas, readers!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Before...

It had been a hard week.

When Fang had called, he said he'd be spending a few days at Tony's house... at least.

"I just need to think for a little bit," his voice sounded apologetic from her phone; but Delle was miles more sorry than he could be. "I'll drop by later to grab some clothes."

He knew she wouldn't be home; trapped at Salder's, the absence of some of his clothes and his missing duffel bag were the only signs he'd come there at all.

Her father hadn't been helpful, either; even if it hadn't been her fault that Fang didn't want to be home, he still would've blamed her. Of course neither child dared to let slip to their parent why there was such a divide, but he didn't need to know; all he cared about was that Delle had fucked up.

"Figures the black sheep would drive away my one good kid," he'd muttered that a few times as Delle had prepared for work; going to one of her jobs was the only time she bothered leaving her room. "Couldn't stand seein' him shine, could ya? Seein' what a proper child looks like just pissed you off didn't it?" He'd scoff a laugh and raise a bottle to his lips, over and over.

'I swear I will break off that bottle neck and jam it into your goddamn eye you worthless excuse for air--' instead she said nothing, did nothing. She couldn't do anything; couldn't blame him for his distance, couldn't make him talk to her when she called. She felt powerless, and as the days got colder, deeper into winter, she wondered if he'd be home soon, if home at all. Her heart was breaking; and the only love she could slake the pain in was Negan's, and even that had grown unbearably painful. It wasn't the ring now she saw when she thought of him, it was her brother's disappointment, and his fist connecting with her lover's jaw.

Bad timing and inclement weather resulted in the bar being all but deserted on Christmas eve; if she had any reason to go home she might've felt cheated, but that wasn't the case. Her father had left a day before, giving no indication of where he'd be spending the holiday; and she knew by then Fang wasn't coming home that night. She'd spent the evening cleaning every inch of the place, fairly certain it hadn't been so spotless since it opened; and even that was a stretch. Once finished with that, there wasn't much else to do but to wait for patrons who would never show up. As the night turned dark and the snow pelted down, she stared out from a seat at the bar, running her fingertip around the rim of the drink before her; gin and soda, icy as the outdoors, while the other held her phone, hoping for a call.
'How'd I let things get this bad?' She had asked herself that countless times over that week. 'I should've said no, should've stopped all this before...' She mopped her hand across her head, eyes screwing shut at the thought. She couldn't let go of Negan; she had it bad, much to her dismay. There was little healthy about their relationship; she knew it was born out of pure sexual attraction, but somewhere along the line she'd found their similarities and her stupid heart had wormed its way into the mix. Their natures fed off of one another's, and he brought out a liveliness in her. It was the first time her personality and self felt accepted, not rejected at worst or tolerated at best. Negan loved her fire.

But she couldn't sacrifice her family for him - could she?

She flipped her phone open, clicking through her contacts before finding Tony's cell number - Delle had demanded it during their phone call, in case of any emergencies. She stared at the ten digits, contemplating a phone call, before her eyes caught the time; 11:48. It was late; even on Christmas eve it'd be disturbing to call. Sighing she opted for a text, thumbs struggling to put together the right words.

-Hi Tony, this is Delle. Thought it was late to call. Could you tell Fang Merry Xmas for me? Miss him.

Sighing, she hit send. She shut her eyes and let her head drop into her crossed arms on the bar. The likelihood of getting anything back was low. Tears stung her eyes but she didn't fight them; she'd clean up her saline puddle of sadness later. In that moment she missed her brother, and lamented her life choices.

"Delle."

She hadn't heard his voice since that night; as shocked as she was she moved slowly, raising her head to the tall figure at the door. Snowflakes scattered across his shoulders and hair, wrapped up in layers against the cold; but his dark eyes looked exhausted, pained. Worse than she'd ever known them.

'But you don't know him. Not really.'

"Hi Coach." God she tried to sound chipper, but there's only so much you can fake when your voice is breaking and you're rubbing tears from your eyes; she found herself in such a state. For a few moments nothing was said; it was a brief peace of just being two people in the same place, as different as the reality was.

"Guess the storm kind of ousted any foot traffic." Negan spoke softly, stepping in a little further, knowing not to sweep her off her feet as much as he wanted to.

She forced a sobbed chuckle, watching him carefully. "Get your eyes checked, pops; this place is packed," she let him move next to her, though he didn't take up a stool. His eyes were focused if a little bleary, gauging her own expressions. 'Why's he gotta stare like that?' "Must be the killer bartender."

"Oh clearly," he glanced to her drink, ice melting and half gone. She looked as beat as he was; sleep had been playing keep away from him, wracked with guilt most nights and camping out on his sofa after his wife went to sleep. He knew very well he wasn't her first concern, he was fine with that; but
it horrified him to think he might've lost her love as soon as he'd gained it. He was ready to fight for her otherwise. He swallowed whatever nervousness he had and dared to reach for her. "Delle..."

As soon as his fingertips contacted her arm she spun, the proverbial dam holding back her worst breaking free as she jumped into his arms, her own wrapping his neck while lips touched in a tear moistened kiss. It was the last thing he was expecting, but he didn't deny her, mouth molding to hers while strong arms held her tight, squeezing and praying she felt the comfort he wished he could grant her.

"S-sorry," she whispered when she pulled away, cheeks streaked in streams and eyes shining with the promise of more tears. "I... I just needed to do that." 'Might be the last time.' Her better angels were advocating hard that it'd be their last kiss; her pained heart almost sided with them.

"Never need to apologize for kissin' me, sweetheart," he allowed a gentle grin on his lips, running a hand through her hair. "I love it when you do."

She felt a chill roll down her spine, but smiled nonetheless. She straightened herself out, moving behind the bar while he took his customary seat. She readied a whiskey for him, which he gratefully accepted.

"Figured we should talk," he suggested, taking a longer sip than he meant to; a little liquid courage was needed that Christmas eve. "Wanted to see how you're doin'."

"Not so hot, Negan," she replied, taking up her own glass. Measuring the intrigue in his face, she explained. "Fang... he hasn't been home in days."

The idea of the fifteen year old boy disappearing for nearly a week alarmed him. "Do you know where he is? He's okay?"

She nodded, taking down a swig. "He's at Tony Sanderson's; got his number just in case. I just..." she huffed and leaned her elbows against the polished wood. "We fucked up somethin' fierce, Negan."

He nodded, grim on his face. "No argument here," his hand reached for her fingers, relaxing a fraction when she let their digits entangle in his grasp. "I hope you know I never wanted to hurt you, or Fang." His actions were confident but his eyes were scared; he couldn't lose her, not now.

"I know," she breathed, rubbing her thumb across the coarse hair on the back of his wrist. "Can't avoid what's happened, now."

He licked his lips, terrified. "Do... do you think he's told anybody?"

She shook her head, knowing her brother better than that; he wouldn't rat on her, but he would expect her to do the decent thing. "He wouldn't do that, even at his angriest," she assured, though her eyes shied from meeting his now. "But... I know what he's expecting of me."

She didn't need to say it for him to know what she meant; this had to end. But he couldn't let that be. "I won't give you up," he practically growled, serious and intense. "I can't, Delle. I love you."

Her heart twisted for a myriad of emotions in her chest. "I love you too, Negan," she choked, tears falling again. "But Fang... he's my family. He's all I have; and he's my responsibility. If he's gonna turn out half way decent and make it out of this town, I have to put him first."
He felt a pang in his chest, but tried to understand. "I know you're his only real guardian, babygirl; but you deserve to be happy too. And..." he paused, playing with her fingers. "He's not all you have."

The sorrow in her impregnated the swell of love she felt in his statement, as any feeling caused by him often did. "I'm not yours to have, Negan. And you're not mine." It was bare then, but she ran her fingertip over his ring finger; it was all the reminder she needed of his status.

"Even if we're not arm in arm, I'm yours, Delle," he affirmed, catching her hand to kiss it. "And you're all mine. Please," he was close to dropping to his knees in pleas of mercy. "Please don't put an end to this."

She watched him, his forlorn expression, the sensation his scruff against her skin, the warmth of his breath; how could she still want him after so much pain? How could she still love him? 'Love sees through flaws,' her devils egged her on, pushing her to him through some unknown force. 'That's why it's called unconditional,' They urged her, the flames of damnation never feeling so sweet as they licked at her heels, praying her closer. 'You deserve to be happy, Delle; and happy looks different on everyone.'

He could tell from her face that he was wearing her down; he let his lips trace the pulse of her bare wrist, each kiss steeped in love. "Please, Delle... let me make you feel good for as long as I can."

A snarl vibrated off her flesh and nearly buckled her knees; those devils looked more and more tempting. Why couldn't she feel good? Why couldn't she be her own weird, twisted version of happy?

She threw caution to the wind; she could sprout horns and a tail for all she cared.

'I need him.'

"...he can't know." Negan's heart skipped a beat at the hoarse whisper - had he actually won her over? He checked her expression, seeing the control and decency beginning to slip; she was hungry for him underneath.

"He won't," he promised, shaking his head in confidence. "We'll keep this under wraps; nothin' risky like before."

"I'll need to tell him things are over between us," even as a lie the idea still stung, though the heat in her cheeks proved a soothing remedy. "We can't be all buddy buddy whenever we see each other in public. If we see each other at all."

He'd make that sacrifice for her. "I can manage that; I'll be as sour as a chick dumped on prom night." He winked, her mouth curling into a smirk.

"Do you think you can convince him back into athletics? A scholarship is the best chance he has to get the fuck out of Dodge; his grades aren't exactly perfect." Despite the complex web of lies they were stringing, Fang's future still sat at the front of her mind.

"It'll take some doin','" Negan admitted, taking a fresh sip; somehow the whiskey tasted sweeter. "But I'll bring him around; he is my star player after all." She smiled at the truth of that.
"There's one other thing," she added, splashing a little extra soda unto her drink. "I want to know you. Properly. I know next to nothing about your life, and if we're gonna commit to all this, I want to know who I'm committing to."

He was a little surprised, but he knew she needed it; Delle deserved honesty at the very least, and he would be happy to oblige. "I'm an open book, doll; whatever you want to know, ask."

She stared at him, trying decide what to do next, her lip between her teeth; but there was just one thing her newly wicked self really wanted. "Go lock the door." She husked, a dark look in her eyes.

He knew that face on her; he sprang from the stool and dashed to the door, twisting the two locks that kept the place open to closed. She slid her way from behind the bar, meeting him in the middle of the small establishment in an entanglement of limbs, a flurry of kisses. 'Drag me down to hell,' she pleaded to her own devils. 'Heaven couldn't feel this good.'

"I need you to fuck me, Negan," she gasped, breath heaving as she pulled away. At some point he'd picked her up, legs securing around his hips; despite the layers of winter wear between them she could still feel his insistence against her core. "Just fuckin' pound me."

Negan grinned, teeth tugging on her earlobe while he sauntered the pair over to the nearest booth, leaning her to rest on the well worn table top, his body curving around hers while she dragged zippers and fabric away from his body. "Least I could do, sweetheart," he muttered into her neck, hands riding up her skirt to do away with her stockings; only to find she'd opted for thigh highs instead. "Oh you feisty little firecracker!" His chuckle became a laugh in his chest, tugging her cumbersome panties away, heat already radiating from her center.

"Didn't want to risk some clumsy old man tearing holes in my fishnets again," they both smiled, remembering their first time together, hurried, fast and starved for each other; somehow those appetites hadn't waned in the slightest, only grown. She whined as his fingers slid through her slick folds, a few well placed circles around her bud had her wriggling beneath him. "Augh... can you do that while you fuck me?" She asked, eyes half lidded and impatient. "I need that cock inside me."

He was already undoing his fly in preparation, hard against his underwear, zipper teeth nearly imprinted on his length; her effect on him was unrivaled in turning him on. "You young'ins are so greedy; you gotta learn to savor the little things--"

"--like your little thing?" She smirked; he was anything but little, making her moan as he let his shaft rest between her folds, her legs up against his front, ankles at his shoulders.

"Don't interrupt your elders, Delle," he chided, letting his hips rut against her, the wetness already worked up by his presence coating him before he'd even pushed inside. His hands ran up and down her thighs, watching mesmerized at his own manhood smearing against her puffy, pink pussy lips; he bet himself he could come from that alone, she was such an aphrodisiac to him. "If you're a bad girl you're not gonna get fucked at all."

She arched, the head of his cock spearing against her swollen clit and making her whimper; she could hear him chuckling from behind her closed eyes. "Mm I'll be good, teach -- cross my heart," her eyes opened to his lusty gaze, matching hers. "I know you want my tight little pussy as bad as I want your dick."

That almost had him thrusting into her then, filling that sweet cunt to the brim as much as she'd let him; but this impromptu cat and mouse game had piqued his interest. "Talk is cheap, doll," he
grinned, grasping himself at the root to guide his tip, more deliberately stabbing against her clit; her head rolling back and whining in frustration. "You're gonna be a good girl for me, aren't ya?"

"Yes--!" She groaned; she was surprised at her own submission, but the way his velvety head rolled against her lips, everywhere but inside her, was driving her mad. "Negan please! Stop holding out on me!"

His laughter rumbled in his throat, skin hot on hers; still he didn't sink in, teasing relentlessly. "You're all mine, aren't you babygirl?"

"Fuck-- yes!" She cried out, attempting to twist her hips enough to slip him inside; but he still held the upper hand. "I'm yours! We've been over this!"

"Gonna scream my name when I make you come, isn't that right?" His voice was ragged, hungry.

"Yes, yes, just please--" she practically shrieked as he sank home, filling her drenched sex completely while fingers dug into her thighs. Her body shook, the stars she usually saw at orgasm already appearing behind her eyes. She'd missed him; even with only a week passed, her very soul was screaming for its mate, and his seemed to be doing the same. "--fuck me!" It was more an exclamation than an order.

"Just what I'm doin', sweetheart," his chuckle was breathy as he fucked himself into her, harsh and hard and just the way she wanted it. As requested he dropped his hand to her mound, fingers quick to find her sodden clit and begin their massage. He needed no verbal confirmation that he'd found the right rhythm; the way her cunt locked up like a vice around his manhood was telltale enough. "That's my girl...Fuck you feel so good." His hips snapped into hers recklessly, his previous taunting having boiled his blood just as it had hers; he was eager to see her unravel, come apart in ways only he could cause.

"Mm fuck, yes!" Their eyes met over their sin, hypnotized by one another. His lips pressed against her ankle, teeth scraping her skin as his pace quickened; she didn't care for slow, deliberate lovemaking that night. After a week of sadness and guilt, she needed to drown in something physical, something animalistic; and he was right there with her. Her words disappeared, soft, unusually feminine whimpers leaving her throat each time he bottomed out, his own growls and grunts matching in a chorus all their own.

"My girl...mine," he mumbled, his thrusts beginning to falter - he wanted to give her all he had, everything - but this wasn't the time for exploration, worship and devotion. They were taking from each other as much as they were giving, desperate and ravenous and close to utter ruin. "S-shit, I'm gonna come, fuck--"

"Please, I want it -- need to feel you come, Negan!" Just as he roared, the first thick strands of his seed filling her did her own orgasm hit, walls fluttering around his length, each convulsion pulling his release into her furthest depths. She gasped his name in a sinful chant, fingertips reaching for him in desperate need. Both of their highs rode out slow, bodies twitching against the other, chests heaving and skin damp with sweat despite the wintry tempest outside. When he finally felt safe to move, he let her legs drop around his torso, leaning down and capturing her mouth in a kiss; demanding as it was restorative.

"Fuck, I love you Delle," he purred into her mouth, nose brushing hers and eyes promising it was the truth. "I love you."
She wished she didn't; she wished she could've turned him away at the door, said good bye and not thought twice about it. But she knew all of that was impossible, now. Her angels wept as she and her devils held him tight, memorizing how every inch of him felt on her, in her. "I love you too, Negan."

It took a few minutes to sort themselves out, kisses shared in between straightening clothes, brushing back hair; she hoped that enough lysol and scrubbing would remove the puddle and scent of their sex from the table. "Hey," he caught her attention, holding up his phone; the time read 12:02 am. "Lookit that," she was encompassed in his arms again, a kiss as passionate and natural on her lips as she'd ever know. "Merry Christmas you little shit."

Warmth filled her; that night, he was all she had. And she could live with that. "Merry Christmas you fucking geezer."

Chapter End Notes

That was a fun one to write ;) was it a fun one to read?

Things sure aren't solved, but Delle deserved to feel some good.

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! I love hearing from you all and all your comments help to keep me writing ;)}
Chapter 62

Chapter Notes

Don't say I don't do nothin' for ya ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Some digs.

Makeshift walls of sheet metal and iron wrought bars ringed the community; at least twenty feet high, by her estimation. They were the only thing that was makeshift about the place, though; from her perch she could clearly see proper houses, people milling around outside like it was an average normal day, sans biters. It was as if someone had created the little village for just such an occasion as the apocalypse. To the right of what seemed to be the gates hung a sign:

-MERCY FOR THE LOST-
-VENGEANCE FOR THE PLUNDERERS-

'Wow. And I thought Negan was dramatic.' She let the binoculars drop to her chest, her newly obtained, dull grey camouflage clothing blending her into the trees. This was the place; the ones who'd struck down their outpost, the ones who would pay.

Alexandria.

She was some fifty feet away, taking meticulous notes in her head of anything she could; the walls, while tall, weren't totally insurmountable. The right projectiles could fly over them, if needed. Raising her spyglasses again, she took a quick roster of the inhabitants she could see; mostly young, some not necessarily ready to fight. A pudgy looking mullet sporting man seemed to be carrying on a conversation with an older man, greying and tall, bearded; what surprised her was the child she saw with him. A young girl, maybe three years old, pigtailed and bounced in who she could only guess to be her Daddy's arms. It was a shocking image in their reality; she tried not to let it humanize them. A few other citizens milled about, a young black woman with a middle aged ginger, someone who she assumed was a priest. 'Get a grip buddy, god forgot us a long time ago.'

She was scouting; Negan had given her the task the morning after her night with Simon. She nearly fainted when he'd come looking for her at Simon's door, fearful he might let new Negan take over again; but he just wanted her for the mission.

"I'm sending you on your own on this one," he'd explained, insisting she take a firearm with her along with Fang, a radio and surveillance supplies. "So don't come back a walking corpse, got it?"

"Sir, yes sir." She knew what he was doing; he was showing her he trusted her judgement, recognized her abilities and loyalty to his rule, to him. It bothered her that he was right; she wouldn't run from him anymore, and as she struggled against the tides, she knew her heart was opening up again.

Her car was miles away, rusted and looking useless, covered in leaves. She knew how to hide and
remain inconspicuous, and had used her map to guide herself to a safe distance to watch the region; with a few hours under her belt, she had plenty to tell the higher ups.

A rustle of leaves beneath her had her freezing; pressing her body against the thickest branch, hoping the freshly blossoming leaves would keep her unseen. 'Voices,' she heard bickering, a man and a woman; no, a boy and a girl. 'Teenagers?' She chanced a glance down, eyes focusing on a pair just to the left of her tree trunk.

They were young, definitely; younger than her. The girl looked rather unequipped to be outside the walls, Delle thinking how easily a biter could catch her loose long hair; the boy, on the other hand, looked war torn and battle born. He carried a silenced handgun, clothes weary, a well loved and battered stetson on his head; from under its brim and his long hair she could barely catch the edge of a bandage. 'Damn, kid,' she raised a brow. 'You've been through hell, huh?'

It was a question that she wouldn't ask, not right then; whatever they were arguing about made them split, the girl running deeper into the forest. 'What're you waitin' for, kiddo?' She wondered, the boy standing still. 'Go get your girlfriend; she'll get her ass killed without you,' He seemed to read her mind, propelled by her thoughts as he broke into a sprint to follow her. She let her head turn to watch him run, far enough she couldn't see him or hear his footsteps. 'Good boy.'

For safety's sake she let another hour pass before she climbed down, the golden hour spraying the woods with setting sunlight; low to the ground she crept, knowing the hour she'd spent waiting meant she'd need to camp for the night.

A rotting woman in night clothes had a different plan for her.

She was already on the ground, her bones having given out ages ago; but her arms swung wild to grab Delle's ankle and pull her down. She fell forward with a thud, the wind knocked out of her as she twisted to see the undead woman dragging herself closer, craving her living flesh. She was just about to sink her teeth into her denim clad leg when a bullet flew through her soft, decaying skull; Delle had saved herself just in time.

"Shit," she murmured, eyes searching her immediate surroundings; she was far enough from Alexandria that they likely hadn't heard the gunshot, but to any local corpses it must've rang like a dinner bell. "Well I'm due for a jog," Leaping to her feet she chose a racing speed, not unaware of the sound of gnashing teeth nearing her. The car was just coming into view; with three corpses muddling around in her path. It was her Fang's time to shine. The first lunged as it smelled her coming, but a powerful swing removed its head from the rest of it. The second came down just as quickly, Delle splitting its cranium down the middle. The third one would serve a purpose.

It was a big one, right next to her vehicle; at least 250 pounds in life, he'd do nicely. When it inevitably lurched forward Delle caught the curved edge of her Fang in its ear, movement ceasing. She let it's body drop against the trunk of the car, her eyes rising up to the darkening sky; it wouldn't be safe to move by herself, at night. Sighing, she sank Fang's curve into the corpse's stomach; she'd need to string up some innards for decoration and distraction from any other biters who could come sniffing around. It was ugly, nearly black congealed blood smearing the car, intestines strung across the roof and doors; but as she crawled into the back seat, she felt comfortable that any trace of her scent would be disguised. 'Thank fuck I brought wet wipes.'

"Delle, checking in." She pulled the radio to her mouth, her hands as clean as she could get them with individually packed napkins. Her back fell against the padded bench, studying the ceiling of the old sedan.
"Hey there gorgeous," Negan's voice crackling across the radio cooled her nerves a little. "Little late to patch in; is this a booty call?"

"You wish," she dialed back her attitude; this was the main communicating line for all Saviors. Anyone could be listening. "Ran into some grabby biters on my way back; took longer than expected."

"Mm, none too shocking," she could hear a little worry in his tone. "So, tell me about our new friends in Alexandria."

She smirked, snickering. "Swanky little town, Negan; proper gated community. Half thought I'd see a goddamn golden retriever on somebody's lawn."

"They have lawns?" Negan seemed amused. "Well, aren't they living the apple pie life! We'll have to remedy that." A chuckle in his throat rumbled in her ears.

"They're decently fortified," she continued, repeating what she'd seen. "Well armed too, from what I saw. Watch towers were well equipped. They might be bitch ass killers but they might be useful."

"Everyone can be useful," he declared. "What do you think? Bring the fight to them?"

She bit her lip, her mind instantly dwelling on the little girl on her father's hip. 'Damn kids.'

"Nah," she decided. "Wait for the big ones to move; these fucks don't look ready for war. Break their leaders and they'll fall in line."

"Goddamn Delle, when did you become a tactical mastermind?" He laughed, she smiled. How'd he always manage to force a smile? "Good work, girlie."

"Happy to serve," maybe that was flirtier a tone than she'd meant; or maybe it was exactly as flirty as she'd intended. Either way she took the conversation back to business. "Gonna camp out in the car til morning. Wouldn't want to run into a herd all by my lonesome."

"You dress the car?" The guts were a trick he'd employed himself more than a few times.

"Sure did," her hand reached up and traced patterns on the back windshield. "Nobody's botherin' me tonight."

"Good girl," 'God, why's he gotta say it like that? She thighs pressed together unconsciously, quelling a throbbing heat - but not very well. "Hope you're cozy."

"Right, peachy," she rolled her eyes in habit, her stomach growling. "Should've brought some grub with me, I'm starving." She heard a laugh on his end.

"Check your glove box." She wormed her way across the passenger seat, engaging the little compartment that hung there; a pop tab can of weathered stew rolled out and into her hands.

"Oh damn! You really are a Savior." she laughed, tugging the lid off with gusto; sure it was a little past its prime, but the goo was delicious all the same. 'Such a sweetheart.'

Slurping down the contents she barely heard him over the radio. "Enjoy; check the bottom of the can when you're done."
She screwed up her face in confusion, turning the now empty can over; she was surprised to see a note scrawled in marker there. A radio channel, and an N. She held the device back, fiddling with its dials until the static changed to silent, patient waves. "Hello?"

"Well hey there, Delle," it was still Negan, but his voice sounded deeper, syrupy in her ear. "Welcome to my private radio frequency."

She snorted, but she was curious. "Really? And what was wrong with the other channel?"

"Like I said, private radio frequency," he laughed. "If I want to bear my bleeding freakin' heart to you I want to make sure nobody else is fuckin' listening."

She rolled her eyes, laying across the backseat again. "Aren't you bright," she drawled, crossing her arms. "Don't you have some wives to entertain?" She hadn't forgotten about them, no; especially Sherry with her pained eyes and sharp slap. However, she was finding, as she had before, she was beginning to care a little less about each one of them.

"Just me myself and I, doll," he replied; she thought she heard the creak of a chair. "Besides, I got you to keep me company. Couldn't be better."

"Right." She murmured, closing her eyes. 'Whatever floats his boat.'

"So... What're you wearing?" Her eyes snapped open, staring so baffled at her radio she bet Negan could feel it.

"What? I'm wearing what I left in," she glanced down at the faded camo fatigues he'd given her; oversized and baggy, but they did their job. "What're you tryin' to pull, Negan?"

"Mm, don't you worry about what I'm pulling," there was heat in his voice, a sound of timed slapping underneath. "Or do, whatever gets you off."

Somehow, it took her a moment to put it all together. "A-are you...?"

"Jerking off? Why yes I am, good ear, sweetheart," She almost threw the radio across the car, but her devils held on tight. "You're a quick study."

"W-what the fuck are you doing that for!?" She hissed; she was trying to keep quiet. The dead could still be attracted by voice. "Put your dick away!"

"What're you gonna do, come n' stop me?" He chuckled into a groan. "Mm, you're a goddamn witch, Delle; your voice has me hard as fuckin' steel."

She fought the fact that her mouth was watering, fire igniting in her loins. "Stop it, Negan; I'll turn off this damn radio."

"Oh no you won't," he growled; he was right. The heat and memory in her couldn't stop listening, too intrigued, too turned on. "I want you to hear what you do to me, sweetheart. Mm fuck -- too bad it's not your pretty little fingers wrapped around this monster." She listened to his grunts, the sound of skin against skin - how was it so hot?

"Fuck, baby; how's that ass always get me so hot n' bothered? I swear, my dick could cut glass right
now," she didn't dare talk back; he'd hear the ache in her, know he was winning her over. "I know you've got your hangups, I get that; but the minute you let me I'm gonna bend you over and fuck you for freakin' d-ays, sweetheart." Her body was reacting despite her better judgement; any time she moved she could feel the squish of slick between her legs, hunger of a different kind twisting in a knot in her belly. 'Fucking Negan...'

"Or do you want it nice and slow, babygirl? You want me to take my time; make you come a few dozen times with my tongue? God I miss the way you taste," he was growing bolder and she stifled a moan; he was particularly good at that. "Could finger fuck you while I eat that pretty pussy; oh you'd fuckin' love that..."

'Stupid sexy Negan!' She cursed, her hands coming to rest over her eyes, the sound of his breath exuding from the radio on her chest. She tried breathing deeply, thinking about corpses, ignoring him outright; but he'd sunk his metaphorical fangs in and wasn't letting go.

"Touch yourself, baby."

Her hands flew from her eyes as she stared at her radio, Negan's pants rough and demanding. 'What the fuck?'

"C'mon sweetheart, that little pink pussy must be soaked by now," just 'cause it is doesn't mean I have to do anything about it!" But who was she kidding; her hand was already drifting downwards, under the loose waist of her pants. "Play with that sweet slit just like I used to; mm I bet you're as tight and hot as the first time we fucked..."

Her fingertips sat at the edge of her mound, knowing very well a dip downwards would be wet and sensitive; he would never know, nobody would. And he sounded so good, so tempting... maybe just once wouldn't hurt.

"I can practically feel you squeezing my cock, sweetheart; love the way you take it," she breathed a quiet groan at his words, finally surrendering and letting her fingers flick across her clit; he'd drummed up quite a bit of excitement, her fingers immediately slippery. "Gonna pound you into goddamn oblivion, fill that cunt to the brim," her body tingled at the idea, the wicked memory of how it felt. "Oh you loved that; when I'd come inside you, so fucking much you'd feel me running down your leg for hours - bet it'd feel twice as good now, doll..." She arched into her hand, eyes shutting and trying to imagine thicker, stronger fingers working her over, dipping down to thrust into her hole and prodding her fleshy walls.

"I can just see you riding me, here in my office," 'in his fucking office!?' She tried to be baffled but her hand's wicked charms made her weak. "Bouncing on my dick like your life depends on it, screamin' loud enough for all of Sanctuary to hear," she heard a long, low groan roll through the radio, knees turning to jelly. "You'd near squeeze my dick off when you came, and I'd pump you so full you wouldn't walk right for a week. Fuck, let me make you come, Delle!"

'Getting there!' Her back was arched, knees bent as her hips thrust against her hand; her clit was practically raw but she was so, so close. "Shit I am so close, Delle; you wanna come with me, sweetheart? That's it, come with me, I know how much you want it, yeah, that's it--" he devolved into a primal moan and she could see him in her head - that white tee shirt pushed up, jeans down just enough, his rock hard cock unloading ropes of white across his stomach, her name purred through clenched teeth - that sealed her fate.

Her muscles spasmed, skin flushed and she bit her tongue to keep from screaming as her orgasm hit;
her pelvis rocked into her relentless hand over and over, her body awash with tingles from head to toe, concentrating on the delicious unraveling in her core. He didn't even need to touch her to play her; he already knew all the cheat codes. She couldn't move her hand from its spot, lips throbbing and twitching with aftershocks as her remaining muscles relaxed, her body dropping against the seat with slow, uneven breaths. 'I mean... technically I didn't fuck him.'

"Hot damn, what a mess," his voice jolted her out of her stupor, hand slipping from her pants, hurriedly wiping off sticky remnants on her leg. "I fuckin' needed that. Hope it was as good for you as it was for me, darlin'."

'He's so fucking cocky.'

'Yeah but he did make you come.'

'Fuck.'

"Can I get a good night, Delle? Let me know you didn't get your ass bit while you were pettin' your kitten?" There was some concern in his levity. She took a few calm breaths before bringing the radio up, pressing the communications button.

"Goodnight, you fucking geezer," she huffed, trying her very best to sound annoyed. "I'll see you tomorrow."

"Sweet dreams, beautiful." Love and smugness came through in his good bye, the line falling silent but not off. He wanted to be ready in case she needed him; but that night would prove uneventful. She would sleep soundly, satisfied in body but conflicted in mind as her dreams had the Negan and Simon taking turns with her then comparing notes. She'd wake physically rested but mentally tired; good enough to get her back on the road and back to Sanctuary. There was planning to do.

The Alexandrians were about to learn that Negan was not to be fucked with.

Chapter End Notes

Two big ol' doses of Negan in two days :O !? Balderdash! Yet here we are.

The Last Day On Earth is on its way; and Delle will have some choices to make.

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! I love to hear from you all and your questions and critiques just make my whole life ♡♡♡♡

Keeps me writing!
Chapter 63

Chapter Notes

First canonical lines of the series!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was easy to forget how vast the Sanctuary was, or how many Saviors dwelled within; amassed in their full flock, taking orders and grouping off into smaller sets, Delle finally gained the scope of Negan's power. She could see why he loved it so much; this sea of strong, life worn survivors followed him so devoutly, because they knew the truth. Power meant protection; and Negan was power incarnate.

She was given to Simon's team, as per her own request. Delle hadn't spoken to Negan about their vocal tryst days before, and it seemed best not to until this was all over. Someone was going to become an example, but Negan wanted a full display of his strength along with him. It was one thing to bash someone's brains in; another to do it when their friends could only sit and watch it happen.

To his credit, Simon was running things like a logistical genius. Every possible route the Alexandrians could take from their camp, even the smallest roads, were well blocked off and totally inaccessible. If Negan was the brain Simon was the hand of the Saviors, grip closing on the throats of Alexandria, choking so slow they barely realized they couldn't breath. Delle watched from the edge of a treeline as their convoy of a battered RV was turned back yet again, and she knew she saw panic in the driver's eyes. Things were starting to get real clear.

"They're gettin' antsy," she heard the voice of another Savior from the radio in Simon's hand; she watched as the old camper rolled away, searching for a way out they wouldn't find. 'Serves 'em right.' "Already hit Rubin's block, and Wade's. Must know by now."

"Must," Simon drawled into the handheld device. "Let's roll, boys. Almost time for the main event." True to his word, Simon didn't reach for Delle's hand like he wanted to; he was trying to respect her wishes, even as she toed the line of disrespecting his. The pair marched to his pick up, preparing to follow while the remaining crew of 15 stayed in place; they had instructions to come when called. Delle curled into the passenger's seat, watching and listening as Simon directed crews of Saviors along the roadways; they were in a hurry and their destination seemed to be the Hilltop. Concentrating their numbers in that direction was a bright move.

As the engine hummed to life and the truck barreled along, he caught the look in Delle's eye. "What?" He asked, wiggling his brows.

"Just excited," she smiled, resting her head against the back of the seat. "Alexandria won't know what hit 'em."

"You don't fuck with the Sanctuary." Simon smirked, darkness in his tone. Delle had observed him carefully that day; he took a more ruthless stance in his authority than Negan. Had it been his call, Alexandria would've been a smoldering pit by night fall; his anger ran hot, unchecked it was completely destructive. However, Negan saw the usefulness of such a faction; they were self
sufficient, for the most part, and that meant they’d bring in healthy tributes for the Sanctuary. People were a resource, after all.

Despite the headstrong quality of his madness, she was still impressed by Simon's leadership; he had a good brain for calculated moves, directing his men in even measures and precise movements. There was something clinical to it; like performing careful surgery.

And lucky Simon; Delle wanted to play Doctor.

"Night's comin' on quick, we should--whoa!" He barked in surprise, his zipper rolling down and Delle's soft fingers sliding in against his under layer. He glanced to her face, seeing full well the heat in her skin. She grasped at his length from its elasticized prison, grinning as it hardened, lengthened in her touch. "J-Jesus, Delle; we're kind of in the middle of something!" In any other situation, he would've leaned back and maybe even pushed her head down; but this was his shot of regaining his position in the Saviors' ranks. He needed to stay sharp.

"Keep on driving, bean pole; eyes on the road. I just want to make you come." She purred, never ceasing her massage of his cock. He growled in his throat, knuckles white around the steering; he struggled with focus but surged on, teeth near busting his lip when she pulled his length from its confines, skin on skin contact only proving more distracting. "F-fuck that's good," he muttered, hips bucking into her fist while his vision clouded at the edges; promises of release pearled at his tip, slicking her strokes and toying with his focus. She smiled to herself, though noted that she could undo him with her touch; power flowed from him to her easily. Somewhere inside, it didn't feel equal. Still, she didn't stop, instead letting herself watch his face darken, his lips parting and tongue darting out like it was searching for hers; until his eyes grew wide, brow furrowing. "Wait, wait stop - something's goin' on."

She pulled away, sweeping up her binoculars and peering ahead; sure enough the RV had stopped, and there was movement from the inhabitants. Her brows raised as she saw a portion of the team carrying what seemed to be a makeshift stretcher from the camper, taking to the woods while the RV rolled into a new route. 'What the hell?''"They're going into the woods."

"Hey," a voice buzzed over the radio static - Dwight. He was proving his mettle that night, earning his spot as a proper Savior. "Rounded up a chunk of the team. Who's got eyes on the RV?"

"We do," Simon piped up, tucking himself back into his khakis. "Looks like they're tryin' to make it on foot; somebody's using the RV for a decoy."

"Well hot damn, smart little lemmings aren't they!?" Negan's laughter boomed across the radio waves. He'd remained fairly silent over the comm line, listening and reworking the plans as needed; but the sky was growing dark and it was almost time to meet them. "Commandeer that camper, Si; we're gonna rendezvous at that clearing." The spot had been marked on everyone's maps; where the Alexandrians would learn an unforgettable lesson. Simon gave Delle a nod; time to flex a little muscle. Securing his gun and she her Fang, they raced to corner the massive motor home against the nearest barricade; the vehicle idled in front of a different troop of Saviors, humming and shivering as if hitched by fear.

The man inside cowered like a pro; Delle recognized the mullet from her scouting, surprised the hairstyle had survived the apocalypse thus far. He was trembling like a leaf as his hands folded behind his head, falling to his knees before the pair of them.
"Can take this one out right now," Simon was already cocking his weapon, pressing the barrel to the man's skull. His intended victim whimpered, drool and tears dribbling down his face; how could this be one of them to have destroyed their outpost? "First of many."

"Si, you're better than that," Delle stepped to his side, a platonic hand on his shoulder. "He'll be judged, along with the rest of them. Don't let him meet his maker with the hope his friends got away safely; he should despair with his comrades," she was surprised how cold she sounded; Negan's teachings were taking root and blooming gorgeous inside her. "besides; you know he loves an audience." A wink and a jab at Negan had him dropping his aim, pouting but nodding.

"You, Jenkins!" Simon's finger jabbed at one of the roadblock Saviors who stepped forward obediently. "You know the meeting spot? Bring this one there. Time's a'wastin!'" He was stomping off to the trailer, knowing it was his responsibility to bring it to the clearing. Delle hung back a few moments.

"What's your name?" She leaned at her waist, head tilting and hands clasping at her back. The man stared up at her in blue eyed fear and confusion, tears free on his cheeks.

"M-m-my friends and c-cohorts call me Eu-Eugene." his deep south drawl was stuttering and terrified; if he was lucky enough to live he'd been an exemplary subject to Negan.

"Well Geney, I'm Delle," she smiled big, lips stretched across grit teeth. "I want you to remember tonight, okay? Every second of it - and remember this too," she let Fang's dull side rest on his shoulder, like she were giving him a knighthood. "Brave is just stupid with good intentions; and stupid of every kind can get you killed right quick."

She thought he might piss himself as she ambled to the RV, taking Simon's hand up the steps and into the tiny rolling living quarters. "What'd you say to him?" Simon prompted, turning the keys in the ignition.

"Nothin' much," she shrugged, falling into the kitchenette booth behind him. "Just let him know the power we hold." 'The power I hold,' she corrected herself inside, smirking at the look now burned into her mind. 'I'm the strongest thing in red leather with the rage I feel,' her arms cradled her head against the pressboard table. 'Just takin' a little instruction to direct it right.'

They were maybe a mile or two from the clearing when she felt the wheels slow to a halt. She dragged herself from her seat, peering out the windshield; Negan was sat propped up on the hood of his preferred truck, giving a wave, Lucille tucked between his legs. His lieutenant and his Delle obediently dropped to their knees as he wandered into the camper, a low whistle on his lips.

"Now this, this is how to make an entrance!" He laughed, surveying the little unit. "You two think you can hoof it from here?" He raised a brow, although they both knew it wasn't a question.

"Yes, sir." They responded dutifully, gathering themselves and making for the door; Negan caught Delle's arm as Simon's feet hit concrete.

"Gonna borrow the little psycho for a second, Si! You understand!" He laughed and kicked the door shut on his subordinate's face; it set his skin on fire and boiled his blood. Within the trailer, Negan grasped Delle's shoulders, a serious look on his face. "Almost showtime, kid - you got your war face ready to go?"

She knew he was expecting a scowl, but instead she cocked her head and beamed - that look suited
her better. "I'm all set. This is gonna be fun."

"Good girl," he declared, thumbs stroking threw her leather. "I'm just gonna tell you right now, doll; I am goin' to be my very, absolute, no good worse tonight. The monster's comin' out to play."

She stiffened but nodded, determined. "I'll be alright. I know you have to."

'She's really startin' to get it.' "I'm doin' all this to keep us all safe. You keep that in your head, okay babygirl? I'm gonna keep you safe."

It shouldn't have warmed her so; someone's skull would be crushed to nothingness at his hand that night, souls would be broken. He was going full warlord; but his promise brought a sweetness to her nonetheless. "I know, Negan," she glanced to the solid door, knowing Simon was just on the other side. Maybe it was him denying her his cock earlier, or the excitement of the evening. Maybe Negan really was wearing her down. 'Fuck it.' "I trust you."

Her hands gripped his cheeks as she brought her lips to his; whatever shock he felt was quickly abandoned, his arm coming around to curve her waist and hold her close. It was a sweet kiss, almost chaste; nobody tongued at the other, no little moans or mewls between them. She just kissed him, remembering the softness of his lips and the scratch of his scruff; him remembering the taste of her skin and the sensation of her breath against him. She took a deep, even breath when she pulled away, his dark eyes starved for more that he knew he wouldn't get at the time. They stared for as long as the evening would allow before a crooked smile found her face.

"You really ought to shave soon," she whispered, tugging at his beard; he smiled that dazzling smile, pressing her palm with his. "Curtain's up in five, you fucking geezer; hope you know your lines."

She tromped out of the vehicle and into Simon's waiting grasp, face a mask that hid all that had just transpired.

Simon thought he heard a whistle again before they walked from earshot, but refused to turn around and let Negan play him further. 'I saw her first,' it had become a mantra for him. 'He's got no damn right.'

There were already Saviors milling around the rendezvous point when they arrived; Dwight was among them, his own little tribe of captives knelt before him. She dared not meet his eye, though she knew he wasn't looking her way either; instead she studied the prisoners.

They ranged from nervous to resistant in their expressions, defying their captors with rebellious gazes. A scraggly haired man seemed to be hurt, but that didn't matter. He'd be counted all the same. An Asian man and a black woman with heavy dreads seemed the most in control; scared, yes, but defiant. A younger woman in a cap stared with fury, but the way her shoulders shook spoke to terror running through her. These are the Alexandrians? Delle wondered, pulling a frown while Simon delved into the tree line; his work wasn't done yet. They don't even know what's coming. She glanced over her shoulder as the RV sidled into the opening, setting a stage for their dreadful work; but it had to be done.

"Twisted!" Her ears pricked up at the call of her nickname; Simon had returned, and he'd brought friends. A team of Saviors had the final members of the Alexandrians at gun point, guiding them to their knees along with their companions.

Delle recognized a few faces, the boy in the stetson was there and she found the brim of that hat had been concealing fiery, bright eyes - or rather, an eye. It darted between the Saviors and the RV,
murder behind the blue iris; they reminded her of her own. She recognized the ginger, the woman she'd seen within the gates, and the tall greying figure who's eyes matched the boy's - family, she guessed. He had a bright expression to him, an intelligence in that he knew he was properly fucked now. Eugene had joined the line as well, simpering and blubbering. Delle raised a brow at a woman who fell to her knees easily, seemingly out of physical weakness. She looked sick; close to death. 'Guess things aren't all sunshine and rainbows in Alexandria.'

"C'mere Delle," Simon tugged his fingers in his direction; she joined the Savior army at the prisoners' backs. She took a place just behind the ginger haired jar head of a man, wondering if that orange would turn red that night. Simon stepped to the center of their semi circle, providing a brief introduction and taunting a few of the enemies personally; but there would be time for more of that later. The warm up was over, it was time for the main event. "Let's meet the man." He rapped on the RV door with his knuckles, stepping aside to allow Negan an empty stage.

The tyrant was in full effect as he stepped out; even in the darkness Delle could see the wickedness taking over, the perfectly channeled hate formed into utter dominance. Lucille on his shoulder, leather coating those long arms and red knotted at his throat, he was a nightmare made flesh; one that Delle found herself never wanting to wake from. Those teeth gleamed in the night, fangs waiting to bite, and she finally grasped the beauty in his supremacy.

"We pissing our pants yet?"

Chapter End Notes

Ou shit about to get crazyyyy.

What do we think, folks?

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! I love to hear from you all, and your words help me keep on top of my posting schedule :3 love you guys!
Chapter Notes

I'm just gonna come right out n' say it; there's straight up sexual assault and beating in this chapter. Trigger. Warning. As. Fuck.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Before...

People will tell you when you've made a bad decision, when you've thrown caution to the wind, that there'll come a day when you regret it. There will come a day where you won't be able to look at yourself anymore. There will be a day when you look back on your choices, look at everything around you, and you'll do nothing but curse yourself for thinking you could get away with all of it.

For Delle, that day never came.

No, for her, it came at night. Happiness is a short lived visitor in the life of a Cornish.

It had only been a week; a week's worth of sinful highs, forbidden trysts and one hellishly spent motel visit. Fang had not yet come home; he'd called Christmas day, they'd spoken for barely a few minutes, not near long enough for Delle to lie to him, tell him it was over between her and Negan when it was only getting started. He had, however, agreed to see her. They set up a date for January second; he'd come home, they'd talk, all would be well. It was a plan, it was something. When she'd hung up she was still sitting on that motel room mattress, fluorescent lights humming in tune with the running shower in the adjacent bathroom. Before she got to see Fang, she'd have to muscle through one long shift at the bar; New Year's Eve. Even in their little town, the night could prove itself rowdy; so unwinding any previous frustrations would be vital for getting through the night.

Negan had been more than happy to unwind her over and over.

She allowed a wicked smile across her features as she set her phone aside, wandering to the bathroom and tugging the shower curtain back; he looked even more appetizing soaking wet.

"Room for two in there?" She asked with the flutter of eyelashes; she was still bare from the night before, so she didn't mind in the least when he dragged her under the warm spray of water.

"Always, sweetheart."

________________________________

Barnes' pub was apparently the place to be that New Year's Eve. Every seat available was snapped up, either by jovial friends who wished well a new year or lonely singular patrons who had nowhere else to be; a drink in every hand. Delle and Barnes danced their complex routine behind the bar, edging past each other as they doled out spirits, shots, beers; it was challenging but not impossible.
Delle barely even cared when Jordy and his neanderthals showed up; they muscled their way into a booth and sneered at her, but she was still riding a Negan driven high. Bad felt good.

Music hummed throughout the small establishment; Barnes usually liked the place quiet, but liked to bust out records from his youth for special occasions. The older patrons sang loudly along with him to songs Delle half recognized; she worked away, smiling at the sodden happiness around her. Sure, it was steeped in alcohol, but for now it was warm, and she was appreciated every glass she handed out.

"The eastern world, it is explodin',

Violence flarin', bullets loadin',

You're old enough to kill but not for votin',

You don't believe in war, but what's that gun you're totin',"

Off key voices of old men droned on with the vinyl, emotion of every breed fueling their words; fond memories, forlorn regrets, pining for younger days. 'Whatever happened to Auld Lang Syne?' Delle wondered - it was the only song about New Year's she could think of. There was something to those lyrics though; why had he spun that one?

"But you tell me over and over and over again my friend,

Ah, you don't believe we're on the eve of destruction!"

"Real cheerful song there, Barnes!" Delle laughed from her spot at the taps; her boss had his arms around the shoulders of old friends, as one does on New Year's Eve. "Really shines a positive light on the next year!"

"Healthy fear of the unknown is good for you, Delle!" He chortled, taking the fresh tray of drinks to a waiting table. "Look before you leap and all that crap!"

She grinned back, though took the advice to heart. She'd spent the late half of that year jumping into things head first; usually a bed and usually with someone she shouldn't have. It had landed Delle in the strangest New Year she'd ever experienced; slinging drinks, laughing with old men, hopelessly in love.

'Better choices next year, Delle.'

'What for? Bad choices seem to be working out just fine.'

The night died down once midnight passed; the pub raucous when the digital clock on a high shelf ticked to 12:00 am; even Delle applauded and grinned amidst rejecting offers of New Year's kisses from drunken revelers. But that was ages ago - drinkers had filtered out into the cold, Barnes had gone home for the night. He'd been grateful to his young employee for taking on the closing responsibilities; but in all honesty she loved the silence of the place by the end of the night. The incandescent bulbs Barnes refused to replace casted a warm glow over the polished wood, black vinyl upholstery; without the sometimes depressing clientele hanging around, it was sometimes Delle's favorite place in the world.
And why wouldn't it be? It'd all happened right there.

Every now and then she'd catch herself staring at the stools she and Negan had sat in when he'd touched her knees the first time, made known his intentions over easy conversation and inebriated honesty. She was young, yes, but the wide array of emotions Negan had coaxed from her since that night were more than she'd ever expected; she'd always been friendly with rage and hatred, but even when it was pointed at him, they danced with happiness, intrigue and love. She still questioned why it had to be him - why such an inaccessible man would be the one to make her feel so alive - but it was him, all the same.

She shrugged her coat on, checking the locks on the front door before sweeping up a bag of trash that needed to find its way to the dumpster in the alley. It was hefty but nothing she couldn't deal with on her own. The night was biting as she stepped out into the dark, day old snow crunching beneath her boots as she waddled awkwardly to the garbage bin. She was trying to ignore the cold biting her knees as she tried hoisting the bag up into the waiting receptacle; okay, maybe it was heftier than she'd given it credit for. 'Damn.'

"Hey princess," she jumped, suddenly acutely aware of the sound of winter footsteps marching down the alley. Her gaze flew up to the last people she wanted to see; Jordy and his pals were sauntering towards her, grinning like wolves. "All by your lonesome?"

'Double damn.'

"Just closin' up for the night, boys," she tried to sound friendly, fully aware of her situation; three men, much bigger than her, stalking towards her like she was their next meal. "Ya'll are out late for a stroll."

They laughed, but not at her joke; just at her. "Still celebrating." Jordy guffawed.

"Happy new year!" Cackled his bleary eyed friend.

She gave a stiff smile, trying to calculate the distance between her and the door; the snow would prove to be a disadvantage, knowing the boots she wore would slip, without a doubt. 'Fuck fuck fuck. ' "Back at cha," she snickered, trying to surpress her nerves. "I uh, I've got a few more things to do inside, so you guys have a good ni--"

"--not so fast, sugar tits!" She tried to make a break for it when they moved, but fate wasn't on her side; Jordy and one of his friends laced her up in their grips, each one holding an arm while her Salder's boss groped at her chest. "Thought we'd start the year off with a bang," Jordy's voice was wicked and mean in her ear, letting go to point to his second companion. "You remember Dave? Threatened to bash his brains in when he complimented you?"

'He wanted to buy my pussy fuck you, fuck all of you I'll rip you apart--' she refused him the satisfaction of her answering, staring forward, defiant.

"Well, he remembers you," Jordy sneered, the man who held her other arm laughed as his spare hand cupped her ass. "Felt you cheated him, a little bit - so he's gonna show you what you're missing."

The sound of a zipper Delle knew wasn't on a coat ignited her fury, her fear. "You get your fucking hands off me, Jordy!" She screamed, her legs flailing to try and hit either captor. "I swear to fucking christ I will tear you apart!! Let me go!"
"Awe, the little lady wants some romancing!" Dave was speaking now, his silence had been holding back an onslaught of mockery. "You had your chance to enjoy it, slut -- now you're just gonna fuckin' take it." She cussed violently as his cohorts forced her down to her knees, ice and concrete tearing her skin.

"I will fucking kill you, you hear me!? I will rip your fucking throat out you sick fuck--" his palm smacked her hard; she fought the reactive sting of tears as she glared up to him, defiant to the last.

"Shut the fuck up and open wide, whore." His cock was out, ready to go in his hand; Delle couldn't get over his general stink, it made her want to vomit; throwing up wasn't necessarily off the table. This was happening; noone was going to save her. The so far unnamed accomplice reached for her face, pinching her nose to force her mouth open; and Dave stuffed himself in.

It wasn't long before a blood curdling scream filled the alley.

Dave fell back, shrieking in pain, clutching at his now mutilated penis; blood gushed from the glans as tears gushed from his eyes, horrified. He stared in anger and terror at Delle, blood that wasn't hers coating her lips and teeth; she grinned triumphantly and spat out a scrap of skin and blood.

"Should be more careful where you put that thing," red drool oozed down her chin, dripping as she laughed. "You can't afford to lose any more inches." Her laughter didn't stop as a fresh strike clocked the curve of her face, the crest of her cheek bone opening to a rivulet of crimson.

"You fucking bitch!" She ceased briefly, when she fell to her side and was kicked in the stomach, now wheezing in mad hilarity. Blows struck her arms, her legs, but all she could taste was the blood of the idiot who'd tried to use her. She'd always remember that flavor.

She wasn't sure if it was a kick or a punch that knocked her out; as her world began to darkness and she slipped from consciousness, she thought she heard a familiar, gravelly voice on the wind.

Fluorescent light is not what one wants to wake up to after a beating; it's too bright, too jarring. It takes over one's vision like a solar flare, and for a second one might think they've died and were off to the ever after.

Delle was thinking just that when the voice of a nurse caught her ears. "Oh, she's awake!"

She blinked - or rather, winked, one eye swollen shut - and adjusted to her surroundings. Who had dressed her in this papery gown? How had she ended up at the hospital? Everything moved slowly as she watched the aforementioned nurse check her vitals, drag a finger in front of her vision to check her reactivity.

"Do you know your name? What year is it?" The nurse smiled but expected an answer, standard for people who came in unconscious.

"Uh... it's Delle, Delle Cornish... and it's 2007--wait no, 2008." 'Right, new year's...' it was starting to come back to her, slowly, dreadfully.

"That's good - picked a hell of a way to ring in the new year, Miss Cornish." The nurse patted her
hand and she held back a wince; peering over she saw a mean bruise peeking out from under the crepe sleeve of her smock. The nurse said very little else, simply making note of her injuries and telling her when she'd be okay-ed to leave. Finally alone, Delle closed her eyes and took stock of what the nurse had said.

'Two cracked ribs... bruising all over... fat lip... hairline fracture in my shin... ' She shut her one good eye and let the tears flow; she felt like an idiot, somehow weak for defending herself. She wanted to take it back, take everything back and never even set foot in the pub that night. 'Is this my punishment? What I get for all my transgressions?' The salty tears stung at the cut in her cheek, but she cried all the same.

"D-Delle?" That eye opened again, a familiar voice at the foot of her bed. A tall figure shook there, sandy blond hair framing horrified features, wet brown eyes and a trembling lip.

'Fang. Eric. Eric is here.' "Hey champ," she tried to smile but the cut in her lip was keeping her from it. "Happy new year."

He dashed around the edge of the bed, tugging her into a tight hug - loosening as she yelped in pain, pressing on the wrong bruises. "Oh my god, Delle-- what happened!?" He was practically sobbing, more of a wreck than she was.

"Just a bump or two, kiddo," her hand found his hair, ruffling it as if she wasn't a massive purple lump. "You should see other guy."

His body shuddered as he held her as tight as he could without hurting her, whimpering against her shoulder. "I'm so sorry Delle; I-I should've been there, I could've--I'm sorry--"

"Hush, Eric," again, it wasn't the time for nicknames. "It's okay. I'm just glad you're here." There weren't any more words to exchange, not in that moment. It was just hugging and crying, Delle too exhausted to process anything further. There would be other days for that.

While the siblings Cornish reunited in that little hospital, just outside, in visitor parking, in his old pickup truck, Negan's head rested on his fists, eyes twisted shut tight as he tried to force those images out of his head. The men running away from her body, the blood soaking the snow. His fiery little love twisted into a ball of pain, bits already swelling and bleeding, those fishnets he loved ripped and stained in red. He could remember screaming, he said something to try and wake her; he called the police, stayed as long as he could, murmuring to her, keeping her as warm as he could, praying she'd be alright. These were the limitations of their secret relationship; it stabbed him through that he couldn't see her, couldn't console her in the state she was in. At best he could text her, but he couldn't even set foot in her home. It broke his heart that he'd done all he could and it was still so little. He'd never felt so...

Powerless.

Chapter End Notes

Whoo boy... that was hard to write. I had this planned from day one but hot damn that was hard.
Sorry to do it to her. Sorry to do it you guys. I am truly sorry.

Even if you didn't like it - leave me a comment, talk to me. Havenly wants to hear from you.
Chapter 65

Chapter Notes

Long one guys, settle in.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Negan was at his best; he was ready to introduce the Alexandrians to their new lives, to the might of the Saviors. He knew more about them than they'd ever have expected; Gregory had been glad to squawk like the chicken he was about every little facet of the group. He knew how they functioned, who was who to who; and he knew the ringleader of their little operation. Rick. Rick was about to learn just how little he really knew about their new reality; and Negan would cement that lesson in blood. As cool and casually as he could he swaggered up to the captives, the tingle of Delle's lips still on his mouth as he grinned.

Negan had learned by that point not to underestimate his enemies. As wimpy and pathetic as the citizens of Alexandria looked right then, they'd still managed to take out his men like it was a walk in the park. All of these survivors had their prime, their peak when it came to strength; and that time was now over. It wasn't hard to pick out Rick from the group; maybe a few years north or south of Negan's age, he practically shone like a beacon there, daring Negan to do something. 'Oh shit's about to get done,' Negan thought to himself, strolling up the line of his fearful audience. 'There's no more room for a light in the dark.'

"Now which one of you fucks is the leader?" He wondered aloud; he knew they wouldn't provide an answer for him, they still had too much hope.

"This one," Simon, in spite of his misgivings, bis jealousy, pointed to the man at the center of it all. "This is the guy."

'Damn; he even looks like an asshole.' The man was tall, and even in the face of being absolutely, undoubtedly screwed he still looked ornery. He'd need a little extra care in breaking that one. "Hi," Negan started, staring like a hawk. "You're Rick, right? I'm Negan. And," he glanced up towards Simon; as much as they were rivals for the moment, he knew all the anger he was feeling matched his. He just handled it better. "I do not appreciate you killing my men. Also, when I sent my people to kill your people for killing my people, you killed more of my people!" Delle couldn't see his face perfectly from where she stood, but she didn't have to know the hate in his eyes. "Not cool. Not cool! You have no idea how not fuckin' cool that shit is. But I think you're gonna be up to speed shortly. Yeah. You are so gonna regret crossing me in a few minutes." He smiled slow, teeth gleaming in headlights. "Oh yes you are."

The air felt thick despite the cold, dry climate; the setting ticked with fear and tension. Delle studied every movement, every word that left her teacher's lips; that's what he'd become, all over again. Showing her how to be in this world, not just an existence. To live, know safety, and protect who you love.

'Protect who you love.'
'Who you love.'

'Who do you love?'

It wasn't the time to answer that question. Delle just listened.

"You see, Rick, whatever you do, no matter what, you don't mess with the new world order. And the new world order is this, and it's really very simple, so, even if you're stupid, which you may very well be, you can understand it," Negan was quick to look to Delle, being sure he had her ear as well. "You ready? Here goes. Pay attention--" leaning down he took a closer inspection of his new friend; sweat poured off of him, he shook like a leaf, but his brain was clearly in overdrive, trying to find a way out of the situation with everyone's heads on their shoulders. 'Wishful thinking.'

"--Give me your shit... or I will kill you," Simple. Easy. Everybody allowed would live; if Rick got with the program. "Today was career day. We invested in a lot, so you would know who I am and what I can do," Those long arms swung wide, as he stepped back to gesture to the full group; Lucille danced in his grip, an extention of his arm, a jagged presentation of his strength. "You work for me now. You have shit, you give it to me. That's your job. Now, I know that is a mighty big, nasty pill to swallow, but swallow it you most certainly will."

His attentions turned back to Rick; he was the one who truly needed breaking. He needed to know insubordination was not a facet of his kingdom. "You ruled the roost. You built something. You thought you were safe. I get it. But the word is out. You are not safe. Not even close."

'Not like us.' Thought Delle.

"In fact, you are fucked; more fucked if you don't do what I want. And what I want is half your shit. And if that's too much, you can make, find, or steal more, and it'll even out sooner or later. This is your way of life now. The more you fight back, the harder it will be," there were still a few unruly expressions in the crowd; good thing Negan was ready for show and tell. "So, if someone... knocks on your door... you let us in. We own that door. You try to stop us and we will knock it down. You understand?"

He cupped his ear, brows raised to the leader of the Alexandrians, waiting for an answer; it was more courtesy than the man deserved, courtesy that Rick did not pick up.

"What? No answer?" He stepped back once more to address the group. "You don't really think that you were gonna get through this without being punished, now, did you?"

Not everyone was walking away from this encounter; he'd made that clear, Delle knew it well. She'd thought that keeping the faces of the men who'd been slaughtered in her mind would keep her stomach from churning, the thought of Simon running to her, blood soaked and furious would keep her steeled against their sobs; but she was perplexed to find she needed none of that. She felt much the same way she did the night Simon had captured her, Fang poised over Marco's head. 'Rules are rules,' she was wrapping her head around the law of the new world order, Negan's world order. 'And broken rules means punishment.' She finally understood.

"I am gonna beat the holy hell out of one of you," Yes, that's what it had come to. Lucille was parched, and her favorite thing flowed hot through the Alexandrians. Any one of them would be a filling choice; but it was a tricky choice nonetheless. Negan surveyed each face; the killing was never the hard part. The hard part was making the right choice, who needed to go so they lesson would stick. The ginger, maybe; but then that kid in the stetson, oh what a look he had on him!
"You got one of our guns," Lucille directed him to the boy, crouching to meet his eye. "You got alot of our guns," his gaze drilled into the kid, but he only looked back, angry and vengeful. For the eye he still had, all Negan could see in it was resistance and scorn. There was fire in that brightness; same as Delle. "Shit kid, lighten up - at least cry a little." He would do no such thing; the boy just stared. Negan wasn't unaware of the second gaze on him, Rick - he could make a safe bet this was his son, and family was always useful leverage.

He turned from the mean little man, returning to the selection process; that sickly young thing next to him looked like she'd keel over on her own. "Should just put you out of your misery right now--"

A strained shriek from his left caught his attention; one of the other prisoners lunged forward, trying to get to the clearly dying woman. He writhed under the quick grasp of Dwight, a complex crossbow dart aimed and ready to meet his brain. 'Where did he find a cross bow?' He ordered the man back into line as he squawked pleas of mercy for the half dead young woman.

"All right, listen. Don't any of you do that again. I will shut that shit down, no exceptions. First one's free. It's an emotional moment, I get it." Delle found herself thinking that was awfully charitable; but deferred to his judgement. 'Seems he's done this enough times to know what he's doing.'

It was back to choosing; who'd win the lottery and face the music? Negan had to admit, it seemed like a tight community. Even amongst greater groups there was usually an outlier, though he rarely picked that one. Here; there was a strong bond between each face he looked into. *This is gonna hurt.* He whistled, taunting and wandering the line; something about the tone and pitch sent shivers down Delle's back.

"I simply cannot decide!" He was chucking now, all part of the mystique; this sorry bunch needed not only to know fear, but to become it. He needed hopelessness to course through their veins, woe would be their bread and butter; but he had other lessons to teach that night. His gaze went to the red coated demon he loved so, her arms crossed, almost side by side with Dwight; how glad he was to not see a lick of fright in her. No, he saw intrigue, curiosity in every move he made. *Simon thinks he can stake his claim out in the open,* 'Negan bit at his lip, grin never faltering. *So can I.*

"Delle...sweetheart," she straightened but didn't budge, wouldn't til he said. "Who would you pick?"

Her eyes widened; why tonight? She was still learning, figuring it all out - she wasn't ready for this. The heat in her was still too hot, unchecked; given her options she would've quickly chosen Rick, but she could assume Negan had plans for him. No, this was too big; she cleared her throat, catching the eyes of the captives. "Why not let fate decide?" She tossed a haphazard gesture along the line up. "Only fair way to do it, if you're askin' me."

She received a snicker and a wink back, Lucille pointing to her for a moment. "Look at you, you altruistic little shit!" He cast an eye to Rick, ticking his head in her direction. "That one keeps me honest. And she's got a brilliant idea there, too; let's play fair."

She'd never thought she'd heard a more sinister reciting of 'eeny meenie miney mo' in her life; Lucille's freshly wrapped, mangled end bobbing to each possible victim as he ran the line randomly, mismatching order and setting each kneeling sad sack's nerves on edge. "And you..." he slowed, the careful steps of this dance were about to end. "Are..." he glanced up to his girl, and between them they knew who'd been chosen; a silent agreement that had been written long before they'd reached that clearing. Lucille came to a stop - Delle had been right. Orange would turn red. "It."

The bear built, whiskered ginger didn't cower, didn't plead; he raised himself as high as his knees
would let him, offering that thick skull as tribute, the very first offering to the Saviors from Alexandria. His friends whimpered, but he was stoic - not ready, no, nobody is ever ready - but in a way he knew what his death would pay for.

Negan reeled back, gripping Lucille for a hefty swing, addressing the entirety of his men. "Anybody moves, anybody says anything, cut the boy's other eye out and feed it to his father and then we'll start," He grinned at Delle; her face was a mask but her eyes were shining like stars. 'Like falling in love.' "You can breathe, you can blink, you can cry...Hell, you're all gonna be doing that!" Back she swung, and down she came; and orange became red.

He shook but didn't crumble, glare mean despite the heavy coating of his own blood. "Look at that!" Negan laughed, gleeful at the well placed hit; the split skull and skin. "Takin' it like a champ!"

"S-suck... my... nuts..." the final words of a dead man, ballsy and defiant til the end.

"HA! Did you hear that!? He said 'suck my nuts'!" The absurdity of it all amused him; but he still had to put him down. Heavy whacks against the man's now irreparable skull turned it into a slurry of blood and brains within seconds, the sound changing from wood hitting bone to wood hitting gravel amidst grunts and sobs.

"Oh my goodness- look at this!" He leaned back, beyond satisfied, pleased as punch; Lucille dripped in red, glistening in cold yellow light. "Would you look at my dirty girl!" As he surveyed the circle his eyes snagged on Delle again; somewhere amidst the hits, the ginger's blood had cast up, splattering her calm face and neck. "Girls," he corrected with a lascivious wink.

One of the prisoners couldn't hold back anymore; she threw up, bringing up contents of bile in front of her knees, almost shrieking throughout. He watched, eyes moving between her and the now pulverized offering. 'Oops.' "Oh, goddamn. Were you - Were you together?" The despair in her face, unable to bring her eyes to the man's body told him yes. "That sucks. But if you were, you should know there was a reason for all this. Red - and hell, he was, is, and will ever be red," 'Always so poetic, Negan.' Delle teased silently. "He just took one or six or seven for the team! So take," he pointed Lucille square in the woman's face, so near she could smell her friend's blood on the wire. "A goddamn look."

Oh, and then they did something they shouldn't have. One of those ornery sons of bitches couldn't hold back anymore. Scraggly haired but clearly muscled, the man who appeared to be Dwight's pet project sprang forward, a meaty fist connecting with Negan's jaw; he stumbled back as two Saviors pulled the attacker down, subduing him like an animal.

"Daryl--" Rick tried to move - a bad call.

"NO!" Negan somehow seemed even larger, like a storm in the night. "That, that is a no-no," he leaned down to his haunches, peering at the would-be brawler. "Not one bit of that shit flies here."

Dwight stepped forward, an itchy trigger finger on his bow. "Want me to do it?" Somewhere along the line he'd become subservient; he'd figured out his behavior reflected on Sherry. "Right here."

Negan gripped the assailant's hair, tugging it from his face; he growled like a caged beast and he knew very well that if not for the head lock on his neck he'd be up and swinging. He was the type of man that could be useful; and Dwight needed an assignment. "Nah... you don't kill 'im. Not before you try a little."
Dwight and the other Saviors dragged him back to his spot; but the outburst could not go unpunished. 'First one's on me,' Negan thought to himself. 'Next time - you pick up the tab.' "Anyway -- that's not how this works. First one's free! Didn't I say that? And then what'd I say - I said I will shut that shit down!" He was on his feet again, moving to the curve of the line; the words were beginning to sink in. That bullheaded man had sold another soul the minute his fist hit Negan. "No exceptions."

Delle's brows knitted, now unsure of who he'd choose. Somebody else would spray red, within a matter of seconds, but how and who to pick? That was the mystery.

"I'm a man of my word; first impressions are important," he let his eyes bore into Rick's soul; really let him know the utter and complete lack of control he held over his people, his life, everything. "I need you to know me." He looked to Delle and she knew his words were for her as well. He needed her to know every part of him, even the blackest, sickest parts. That was the only way she'd love him again. He had to make her love every piece.

"So..." a pregnant pause followed, and for a moment all time stopped; it waited for him to make his decision, bent for his will. And then he knew. "Back to it!" And another skull opened.

It was the Asian captive this time; his head opened easily, one eye bursting from its socket while rivers of blood cascaded down his face. It was nightmarish, and for a moment Delle balked; her focus drawn to the sick woman who stared and wailed at the second victim. There had been love there, love the severely brain damaged man was still trying to communicate.

"Buddy, are you still there?" Negan's body dipped, Lucille at his back to examine his latest victim's face. "I just don't know. It seems like you're trying to speak... but you just took a hell of a hit!" Delle couldn't seem to drag her eye from the sobbing woman; something told her that Negan had made a horrible mistake. He had been the wrong choice. "I just popped your skull so hard your eyeball just popped out... and it is gross as shit!"

"M-Maggie..." 'Holy hell how is he talking right now!? Negan almost regretted his choice; the guy was tough, but even the tough had to fall. "I'll find you..." he finally looked up to the sickly woman, the one he was about to widow; he saw Delle's look had changed too, something ominous, uncertain. He needed her certainty.

"Oh..." he sighed, a little shake of his head. He'd somehow selected the romantics of the group; fate was a bitch from time to time. "I can see this is hard on you guys. I'm sorry," he hoped she knew that was for her, too; a brief taste of the Negan she remembered. "I truly am...but I did say it," and the new self was back and Lucille was ready. "No exceptions!"

The air was filled again with a concert of smacks, pained and forlorn sobbing as Negan dispatched his second tribute. He fell faster, nerves still desperately twitching a body that would never respond again. "You bunch of pussies," Negan goaded, his fury never sharper. "I'm just gettin' started," splashes of red coated the ground and as he was sated, Lucille stole back with her a chunk of scalp and hair tangled in her barbs. "Lucille is thirsty -- she's a vampire bat!"

Delle rolled her eyes; only to freeze when she realized Negan had seen her do it. 'Shit; who else saw?" He couldn't have the appearance of disobedience in his ranks, even from her - but his sights were set to Rick again. He was the more important student for the moment.

"What? Was the joke that bad?" Nothing stopped that toothy grin, not for a second, not even when Rick finally spoke.
"I'm gonna kill you." It was faint, but she'd heard it. His accent was deeper than theirs, somewhere further south than where they were. How he could still be so determined, Delle couldn't guess.

They sparred verbally for a moment or two before Negan looked to Simon. "What'd he have on him? A knife?"

As much as Simon could stand to off Negan himself at that moment, Delle was still safe, and had played along as needed; so he would too. "He had a hatchet."

Negan screwed up his brows, the answer comical. "A... hatchet? 'Is this the guy come to cut little red from the belly of the big bad wolf?'

"He had an ax." Simon's faction had confiscated every weapon, and true to the Saviors categorized who had what easily. Where would Negan be without the mustachioed sicko?

"Simon's my right hand man," he tilted his head to the man; he had to give him credit there. "Having one of those is important. I mean what do you have left without them? A whole lot of work," but then he was back to Delle, her demeanor inquisitive and... 'Oh she's hungry. She wants a taste.' "But then there's Delle," this time he pointed, Rick's head turning and his blue eyes met hers; polar opposites in that instant. "She's my little fuckin' maniac. And a good psycho can be just as handy."

'What's he got in mind?' She wondered, worried but interested. Negan gave a command and with so to-do, Simon produced the smooth handled hatchet, placing it in Negan's waiting grasp.

"Okay!" He barked, standing to his full height and slipping the grip of the ax into his belt. He hoisted Rick by his collar, practically dragging him across the clearing in his grasp, back to the RV. "I'll be right back -- maybe Rick'll be with me. If not, we can just turn these people inside out, won't we?" He grinned a moment for his audience. He was in top form. "I mean... the ones that are left," he paused, letting Lucille point to Delle. "Delle, come."

She blinked, glancing to Simon and his unreadable expression; this seemed like a private moment, just for Rick and Negan. Why was she required?

"Get that ass in gear, you little shit! Burnin' moonlight!" She broke into a stride that didn't quite feel like her own legs moving, feeling out of her body as Negan tossed Rick into the open door, stepped inside, and grabbed her arm to haul her in too. "Time for a little field trip."

Chapter End Notes

Fuuuck, and here I thought writing from proper scenes would be easier!! How'd I do here guys? Should I include less canonical words? It can be alot to unpack and tough to pick what stays in since it's all gold . Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! Love to hear from all of you and your words help to keep me writing!
Chapter 66

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The blade of the ax wedged itself in the table with a metallic clang, Delle standing on the inner step as Negan's boot shoved Rick back, into a heap. "Lets go for a ride." He jerked his head as he turned, motioning for her to take the swivelling passenger seat while he tried to get the engine moving; the old camper was rather uncooperative. "Wow, what a piece of shit!" The motor home was at least twenty years old and it handled like crap. Delle stared at Rick's obstinate eyes, darting between herself, her leader and the hachet in the table; she knew Negan was watching too, rear view adjusted to keep an eye on the man.

"I'm gonna kill you," Negan snickered, still supremely confident, throwing on a mock version of Rick's tone. "Are you kiddin' me? Did you see what just happened, what I just did? You just..." he was going to be tricky, but Negan was prepared for the long road to take to get Rick looking at him the right way. He could see the other leader's gears turning, betting himself he could break through the tiny young woman that sat between him and all of it being over. "Your best chance is to stand up, grab that ax, and drive it through the back of my head - if you can get through Delle," it would be a feat, no question; he knew just how vicious she could be when that fire burned wild. "See how you do. Keep actin' tough. Go ahead," part of him wanted to see it, her loyalty in action, for Rick to see his beautiful, crazy girl. "Grab the damn ax."

Everything and nothing happened fast; Rick gripped the ax and pulled it from its gash, managing to get a step in before Fang was free, edge pressing into at first layer of skin on his stubble throat. Delle's mean glare dared him to do more, knowing he wouldn't. Negan hadn't even moved from his seat.

"Drop it." She whispered. Any bloodthirst that had been in him waned quickly, the weapon clattering against the floor. Negan cackled as she flipped the machete in her hand, smacking the dull side hard against Rick's throat; it knocked the wind from him, as did a well placed kick to his stomach. Delle replaced the hachet in the table, glaring daggers at a gasping and shuddering Rick once more before finding her seat again; she wouldn't take her eyes off him for that whole ride.

"Don't make her get up again," Negan commanded, knowing that she would if she had to; she was his good girl. He smirked as the road ahead began to lighten, the sun coming up to look at all his fine work. "Look at that... dawn is breaking." Delle knew, but her job was clear. Rick was her priority. "It's a brand new day, Rick." He leered back through the rear view, dark eyes on blue - what he said next would speak volumes to both Rick and Delle. "I want you to think about what could of happened. Think about what happened. And think about what can still happen."

'We can still happen...' She repeated inside, Rick's eyes leaving hers to sit up against a cabinet. The RV got moving, and they were off to their next lesson.

The destination was one of the blockades the Saviors had raised, a burning dam; but while on route Negan couldn't help but watch Delle and Rick. She was like a tiger, ready to pounce if the prey even thought about moving. Still as stone, her face unmoving; she'd handled the previous night's events so perfectly, he couldn't have been more proud of his young lady. She still wore his first victim's blood on her face; she hadn't even wiped it away, and it was the most beautiful red he'd ever seen on her. She was picking up everything he was laying down; there was something funny about Delle
Cornish, one of the most challenging young charges he ever taught, now being his 'A' student. As he drove a wayward corpse found its way into their path, it's squishy skull exploding across the windshield.

"Oh, boom!" Negan bellowed, tossing a look at Rick. "Remind you of anyone you know?" He glanced to Delle before turning back; her nose twitched and the corners of her mouth seemed to tug upwards, but she kept her eye steady. By the time the RV slowed, the white, dull light of the morning streamed through the windows and painted the world as bleak as it felt for the ruined Alexandrian. Negan left his seat, gesturing that Delle stay put.

He retrieved the ax and Lucille and got to one knee, close enough to Rick to see each and every drop of sweat on his dumbstruck face. It had been a long night but Rick still wasn't where Negan needed him to be. He was a headache, a strong soldier who carried his whole world on his shoulders; and if he could be broken - when he was broken - those shoulders would ferry Negan so much shit he may never have to worry about the Sanctuary again. But first things first.

"You are mine," his voice was low, husky and honest. "Those people back there? They're mine," he raised the ax to Rick's eye, not completely sure he could see. "This? This is mine," he pointed back, with the head of the ax, to the girl in his passenger seat. "Even that tight little ass back there is mine, crazy though she may be." He knew she wouldn't argue with him, not at that second; he just wanted her to soak in it, the indisputable fact that she was his. She could argue it later, but it wouldn't make it less true.

She made note of his choices, going to the door and opening it to the swarm of undead corpses outside, popping the nearest with the head of Lucille. He reached a long arm out, ax in his grasp, and threw; she heard it thumping against the roof.

"Hey Rick," he drawled, demand in his carefree tone. His eyes flicked from the outdoors. "Go get my ax. Let's be friends."

Rick didn't budge; he seemed in shock, still reeling over the brutal beatings Negan had dished out. For a second Delle wondered if he could even hear him. Her head tilted slow, sticking out her boot and poking at his shoulder; it seemed to snap him out of it, his face slack in terrible awe. Negan leaned back in, bloodied Lucille backing him up.

"Get my ax."

Rick finally stood, limbs barely functioning in time with what he needed to do; a quick grip and a shove had him out of the RV, door shut on his sorry ass.

The roar of biters outside meant Rick had his work cut out for him, but Delle's mind wasn't for him at the second; Negan, in his black and red, leather and wood and blood, had her in his gaze at the mercy of his scrutiny.

"Havin' fun, sweetheart?" He smiled, the mix of his new and old selves blending past the point of differentiation before her. "Learnin' alot?"

She blinked, but smiled that million dollar smile he melted for. "Tons, teach," she replied, sheathing Fang safely away. "Seems everybody is learning today."

"Sure are," he purred, his long legs striding over to join her and tug her from her seat; her front nearly touched his, his fingers lacing hers. "Do you know why I brought you along?"
That she hadn't quite worked out yet. She bit her lip as his arm hooked her waist, bodies together now when her eyes found his, at a loss. "We're not fucking while you're testing him, if that's what you're thinking."

"A man can dream," he said wistfully, leaning over her little frame. "No, I wanted you here to watch the follow through; start to finish. It's not gonna stick if you don't see all I do."

"Have to see how the sausage gets made," she smirked, twisting a little in his touch; he really had to worst timing. "Pig to plate."

"Good girl," he matched her expression, letting her hand loose to pet her head. "I want them scared shitless of you too; that asswad Rick especially. If I can get him to bend to both you and me then all the better for us."

"Me?" She raised a brow; she heard heavy footsteps above them. Rick had managed to worm his way to the roof, to the ax. She was impressed by his mettle, but uncertain of her own; she was used to scaring folks, but she was more of a sideshow, a quick stab in the heart. Negan needed her to be a slowly twisting dagger in the belly of Alexandria, a spare tyrant when he couldn't come calling. "You think I can?"

"Oh sweetheart I know you can," he emphasized his belief in her strength; just enough to inspire her. "Most folks, they didn't start hatin' or ragin' til after all this started. You've got years of experience on them - and that's what I need," he stopped, raising his head and voice to the ceiling; Rick needed some encouragement too. "Betcha thought you were all going to grow old together, sitting around the table at Sunday dinner in the happily ever after," Negan and his analogies. "No... doesn't work like that Rick. Not anymore," His bare hand cupped the cheek of his favorite psycho, running a thumb through a spot of blood. 'But we don't need it that way, now do we darlin'? Never did.' "Think about what happened."

Rick was doing just that, and so was Delle. She thought of all that happened since the day she'd reunited with Negan; first on that field in their town in what felt like centuries ago, then again at Sanctuary. Every laugh, tear, mean word, kiss, fuck, embrace suddenly felt fresh and raw, just seconds past, familiar and overwhelming. 'Can you really forgive him all that he's done? All he could do?' Her angels - who she hadn't heard from in ages - begged her to reconsider. 'He's not a good man, Delle; you can't fall for him again. You barely survived loving him the first time."

She chewed at her lip, eyes studying his upturned face, the lines and creases of laughter and anger, the more salt than pepper beard, the sharp jaw underneath. She took in their situation, his arm loose around her as he tortured the man outside; a man who'd killed their people, but torture was torture all the same. 'He's not a good man... but when was I ever an angel?'

He dipped his head back down, struck by the look on her face; it was almost painful, but wasn't, brows upturned and lips pressed tight together, nose just a little crinkled. Those bright eyes half lidded and soft between dark, sweet lashes. He knew that face. He'd seen it in the dim light of a gym storage room on a cold winter night the first time; couldn't recall when he'd seen it last. But that didn't matter, what mattered was it was there at all; the same stare he'd been giving her since she'd blown back into his life. She was falling in love again.

'If she ever even stopped.'

He couldn't help the shit eating grin that found his face; it wiped the precious expression from hers in
an instant, but he'd seen it all the same. "What cha lookin' at, Delle?" His purr was so mocking she wanted to smack him.

"Just some fucking geezer," she spat with a sneer, wiggling from his grasp and pulling Fang free. She banged against the ceiling with the blunt end, made sure their new pal was listening. "Hey Rick; it's Delle. Don't think I properly introduced myself, hi," she shot Negan a look as he muffled a chuckle. "Listen buddy, it's no good where you're at right now; I get that... but your people are waitin' for you. You're all that's standing between them and a very messy, slow, painful end, one I bet you don't want to see - you can save 'em, Ricky baby. You can be the hero," she glanced to Negan, who was now just letting her speak; arms crossed around Lucille and nodding approvingly. "One last time. Don't you want to see your boy again?"

That had him moving, at least; but he stalled again and was beginning to try Negan's patience. "People died, Rick - it's what happened. Doesn't mean the rest of 'em have to," he was glaring overhead now, practically growling his words. "Get. Me. My. Ax."

Nothing.

"Get me my damn ax!" He repeated, more heat on his tongue.

Nothing. Sighing, Negan moved to the driver's side of the RV, producing one of his favorites, an AK 12. 'When did he even put that there?'

"Thought you were the guy, Rick!" He sounded honestly disappointed, releasing the safety and checking the sight. "Maybe you're not... we'll give it one more go," he aimed upwards, a few feet away from the footsteps. "Last chance." Firing upwards finally excited Rick's feet, heavy thuds carrying him down the trailer as bullets directed him there, the vehicle bobbing when he jumped. The pair shared an odd look before heading towards the back of the RV; pleasantly surprised by what they found.

Rick had jumped for it; clinging to the distended corpse the Saviors had strung up from an overpass. It gnashed for his flesh as the dead below clawed at his ankles; and it was all a little too familiar for Delle's liking. Ingenious though it was, the chain at the corpse's neck was beginning to split the old, rotted flesh; Rick didn't have much time.

"Well, gotta give him points for creativity." Negan laughed, but Delle's hand was gripping his arm so tight he thought she'd bust the leather.

"Help him out," she murmured, smiling despite shaken eyes. "At least to get your ax back."

There was something more there; but he didn't press it. 'Later.' He propped open the back window, taking up stance on the travel mattress and laying fire into the horde; it brought down just enough of them to build a cushion for Rick's fall as the biter's neck finally ruptured. With careful aim he put down a few extra bodies as Rick realized he'd been saved and unbitten.

"Clock's tickin', Rick!" He grinned and let the window drop closed; Delle seeming soothed for the moment. "Think about what can still happen." They could hear the sound of blows and grunts around the vinyl camper, felt the odd shove up against the siding. Rick had kicked into fight or flight mode. Delle heard the door click, but it didn't unlatch; Negan seemed equally confused, jimmying it free and just in time to see a ring of hungry corpses circling in on Rick, bloodied ax in hand; a quick trigger laid them out, giving Rick ample time to scramble back into the RV, the land of the living.
He was blood spattered, panting like a dog and, if it was possible, sweating even more; but Rick had survived his first test with Negan. That was more than many long dead people could boast. The weapon hung casually from his shoulder, Negan held out his leather coated hand for the ax, Rick taking more than a few seconds to hand it over.

"Attaboy!" Negan praised and slammed the ax back into the table, the spatter of dead and clotted blood painting the surface. The engine revved and they began their route back to their respective peoples; Rick and Delle sat across from each other, her face cradled in her hands like it was the most mundane day in the world.

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She kept him awake. He kept trying to nod off as they rambled down the roadways, clearly exhausted; but he wasn't allowed to sleep, not in their company, not with her around. She wanted it pounded it into his mind that he did not do anything without their express permission.

"Wakey wakey, Ricky baby!" She jeered, sticking a finger into his forehead; those exhausted eyes barely remaining open. "This is an exciting day, don't go nodding off now." Negan chuckled from the driver's seat, content to let her play.

Rick didn't speak; maybe he couldn't. All that had been forced on him was demanding, no doubt there; but this was the leader of the Alexandrians! She'd expected... more. Wanted more. She contemplated if she was just being greedy as the wheels ceased, the barely visible scene from the spattered windows looking familiar again.

"We're here, prick," 

Oh that name is gonna stick.

Delle declared to herself as Negan gave yet another speech, moving through the cabin, retrieving rubbing alcohol from a first aid kit and discussing Rick's new life; that and his proverbial castration as a leader. "You were in charge," he grunted as he tugged the ax free from the table; Rick's coat made a fine towel as he sloughed off some congealed blood. "Hell... you were probably addicted to it. And then," he wiggled the hatchet in his fingers. "Clip clip. That's over." A healthy pour of the wound cleansing liquid coated the head, a real rag produced to get it spotless and hygienic. Negan tilted his head to Delle and she slid over in her seat, his thigh pressing hers as he sat down.

But you can still lead a full life, producing for me," he extended the ax to Rick, his spare arm slinking over the back of the nook's bench. "Y’can have this back... think you're gonna need it."

Delle's brows raised only a fraction as she looked to Negan, unclear on the plan; he had one, to be sure, but she hadn't any idea of what was coming next. Rick seemed pretty thoroughly broken. He noticed her eyes but didn't meet them, just grinned in his wicked way. "Just got a feelin'."

Rick took the ax.

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10 minutes had passed. 10 minutes was all it took for Negan to bring Rick to the place he needed to be; he needed to understand he was a puppet now, at best, and whatever Negan decreed was law.

Unfortunately, that meant bringing his son into things.

He was laid on his belly, left arm in a makeshift tourniquet, a line across the middle of his forearm -
he was about to lose everything over that line at the hands of his daddy. Negan had no intention of it actually happening, but Rick needed to know that it could. That at any second, he could dismantle everything, piece by painful piece. It'd come to that.

Rick was a sobbing puddle, begging him to take his arm, take him instead; but that wasn't what he needed, he needed Rick's hand to be his. The boy - Carl, apparently - would be fine; but Rick needed to believe beyond a shadow of a doubt that he was entirely his. He needed that look of total obedience.

"Please, don't!" The strong, silent leader had been reduced to next to nothing before his friends, family. "Please, god please."

"Oh my god," Negan was losing his patience; it'd been a long night. "Are you gonna make me count?"

Delle stared from the left of their scene, trying to keep her face as still as possible while fire burned in her eyes; this part she wasn't thrilled over. The kid, who appeared strangely calm in the face of becoming a sudden amputee, didn't deserve this punishment for the sins of his father. She was fuming mad but bit her tongue; she had to trust his judgement. She had to.

"Okay, you win! I am counting!" He drawled amidst Rick's sobbing, right on the brink of sanity. "Three!"

He watched as he sputtered, begged, tears coating his face. "Please," he wailed, searching desperately for a way out. "It can be me, please!" Delle was starting to struggle inside.

"Two!"

"Please, don't, I --" A sharp leather slap found Rick's face, Negan's hand gripping it bruisingly tight, eye to eye with each other.

'Almost there.' "This is it," Negan stated, brows raising as he stood again. "ONE."

Disjointed, truly broken screaming filled Delle's ears, her muscles beginning to twitch. She knew it was Carl lying there, vulnerable and weak, but all she could see was Fang. Her fingers gripped at her crossed arms, each knuckle white and taut.

Negan, in the meantime, reveled in his captive's cries, watching him grip his sons limb, shaking as he took up the handle of the hatchet. The boy was strangely calm, cool at the prospect of losing a limb; he was like a young Delle, fierce, fearless and angry. At that thought he glanced to her; and oh, was she mad. He could see her pulse pounding in her neck, pupils pinpricks in her eyes that were trying to hold herself from bursting. She stared directly at him, eyes shooting through his soul; and ever so slightly, just enough movement for him to see, she shook her head. 'Shit; pull back, you idiot.'

"Rick," Negan hunched back down, catching Rick's attention before he could bring down the severing blow; his face was one of madness, a complete loss of his mind. Negan was going to give it back to him. "You answer to me. You provide for me. You belong to me...right?"

Rick could only nod, hyperventilating, his eyes staring everywhere but at his new owner. He couldn't have that, he needed the words. "Speak when you're spoken to!" Negan roared, grasping his face even harder. "You answer to me! You provide for me!"
"P-provide for you..." Rick groaned, nodding wildly.

"You belong to me - right!?" The word hung in the air, waiting for its answer.

"R-right..." Rick was done. Broken. And he was Negan's, now.

"Right," Negan rasped, satisfied. The look he couldn't bear on Delle suited Rick just fine. "That... is the look I wanted to see."

Delle took a breath, feeling like her first; the boy would keep his arm, his life, for now. But the proximity, how close he was to the other option had shaken Delle, and her foundations in Negan; if he could do that, she knew she would be expected to do the same one day. 'Can you steel yourself that much? Maim your very own Fang?'

Negan collected a new pet, the would be attacker from the night before - who went by the name Daryl, so very fitting to the name - he was wild, but he had the kind of spirit Negan liked in his men. "Not a little bitch like someone I know." He'd sneered at Rick, making sure he was beat down. It had been a long slog through muddy waters but the Saviors' introduction to Alexandria had been incredibly constructive; they really knew their place now. They knew where they fit within the new world order; and that was at the very bottom. They were next to nothing, and they felt it.

"We'll be back for our first offering in one week - until then, ta ya." His footsteps crunched across gravel to his preferred truck, smug and triumphant over his earnings but fully aware of the fight he'd whipped up in Delle. Settling into the drivers seat, he waited; only to watch as Delle's fine little ass swayed next to Simon, crawling into his car. Despite the distance, he could see the pout on her face before the vehicle joined the convoy, back to Sanctuary, away from him.

'Oh, so it's like that.'

The left the Alexandrians in the blood and dust, Carl wondering what kind of woman could make Negan stop with a shake of her head. He'd seen what he shouldn't have.

Chapter End Notes

Delle's dealing with alot of personal conflict; her private lessons are far from over.

What did ya'll take away from this chapter? Write me; l love to hear from you guys :) it keeps me writing fast enough for my schedule!
The ride started very quiet; Simon was infuriated, obviously. Anything could've happened on that little momentary vacation, they could've done anything; it made his skin crawl. He could see Negan's truck in his rear view mirror, empty but for the big man himself; Delle had gone against him and chosen Simon to ride with. 'How long is she going to keep choosing me, though?'

Delle wasn't exactly pleased in that department either. Though she was extremely grateful for the chance to be greater than she was, she'd never asked to fall for Negan again; and yet she could feel it happening, little by little. True that what he'd done to the youngest prisoner had set her teeth on edge, but it was only a matter of time before his greater transgressions stopped bothering her; it had happened the first time, it would happen again. She looked to Simon, the man who'd made Sanctuary bearable when she was still learning the ropes, when her heart still had a protective coating against Negan's charms; he should've been the one she was falling for, he was the one she wanted.

But Negan was the one she needed.

"So... how was the camper?" His voice sounded strained; it was clear he was holding back alot. On top of Negan actively trying to fuck Delle, he'd chosen her over his so called right hand man in an instant; he had to wonder why.

"S'fine," she replied, leaning her head against the window, sun soaked trees shooting by. "The big lummox just wanted me to see how he breaks people." 'Like you don't already know first hand.'

"Hm," He's not satisfied, she knows it. "That all?"

She sighs and looks over to him, across the cab. "He wants them to be scared of me; like they're scared of him."

His expression was perplexed; Delle could handle herself as well as any other Savior, why did she need to be feared? "Sounds like he wants a little clone of himself."

"Wouldn't put it past him," she chuckled. "That big of a god complex would need two people to carry it."

The tension took over again just as quickly as before; Simon was still stewing and would continue to do so, if not given the chance to do otherwise. Delle had to do otherwise.

"Say what you want to say, bean pole," she leant her head against the edge of the bench, waiting for an outburst. "Instead of sitting over there like a raincloud pissed all over your birthday."

Dark eyes met hers, and she saw genuine anger and hurt living there. "I'm just fucking tired of him tryin' to get with you any chance he gets," he shook his head with a sigh. "You know the whole time you were gone I couldn't get the image of you bent over a table fucking him out of my head."

"It's weird that in that whole situation, that's what you were thinking about," she tried to lighten his mood but to no avail. "Negan isn't getting anywhere with me. Like I have said over and fucking over
'But you. Need. Him.' Her devils would always be advocates for the worst choice; and Negan would always be the worst.

"I know, Twisted," he grunted, reaching over to lace his long fingers with hers. "I'm just worried he'll get to the point where he won't take no for an answer."

The very suggestion turned her stomach; she knew very well what Negan's thoughts were on consent, had seen him make those thoughts known first had. The suggestion that he would ever... Simon didn't know his boss as well as he thought he did. "I'll slit his throat before he tries to pull any punches with me." She said confidently; he didn't need to know that she was in no danger there, nor did he need to know why.

Simon gave a tug on her hand, bringing her in close; her hair smelled of smoke, blood and her personal scent on his shoulder. "That's my smart girl."

She squeezed his thigh, eyes closing as a result of a night and day spent wide awake. "I can take care of myself, Si; you don't gotta go turning grey over me." He snickered and pulled her in close, letting sleep take over; but even there, Negan permeated her thoughts. There, he was taking over.

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She woke to the gates of Sanctuary rolling into view, the sun high in the sky at that point; a chunk of the fleet had split off in different directions, some collecting offerings from other communities, some heading to outposts of their own. The night had been exhausting, but the gears still needed turning.

"Hey there, Delle," Simon murmured, his warm hand on her waist now; it was a welcome feeling, something akin to sleeping in her own bed. "How'd you sleep?"

She stretched dramatically, joints popping from lack of use. "Eh, been better," she groaned; comfortable though Simon was, the cab of an old truck didn't make the best cot. "It was a long night after all."

He smiled and nodded, brows wiggling in her direction. "You want to come up to my room? I could tucker you out, really send you off to dreamland." A shift of his hips showed Delle he was eager for some tiring work.

She grinned and nudged his shoulder with hers, the prospect of unwinding at the hands of Simon after such a trying excursion sounded heavenly. "I'm game; show me what you got, mister sandman."

He seemed half giddy as he pulled the truck into the park, eager to get things going and put the rather immasculating experience behind him. They tried not to appear too eager as the left the vehicle, setting an even but firm pace as they marched for the stairs to head inside; they were halfway up when that gruff growl caught both their ears.

"Si! Delle!" Simon was screaming inside as they both turned to see Negan, his boot up on one step and elbow against the railing, smiling like he had a secret. "Well aren't you two in a hurry?"

"Long day, boss," Simon hissed out, trying to be courteous but failing miserably. "Just lookin' for a
little shut eye."

He raised Lucille in his grip, pointing her at his second-in-command. "That is a fine idea! You turn in, Simon," the bat shifted, now to Delle. "Me and the girl have got to talk business."

Immediately Simon wished he'd been holding her hand, an arm on her shoulder to keep her close. "I uh... think we're both pretty tired..."

"What, you think I'm not?" He began to rise up the stair, stopping two below Delle to get on her eye level. "It was a big fuckin' day for all of us, particularly me; but my favorite student and I have a chat comin' on. Gotta give her her grades," he winked to Simon, knowing the blood in his veins was on fire. "Maybe she's earned a D."

Simon was close to punching him out, sending him flipping off the metal banister. "Think she's about done with you today, Negan. Girl can only handle so much."

The insult didn't phase him, though he let the smile on his face dim into his threatening resting face. "Let's let the lady decide how to spend her time, Si. She's a big girl," he closed the gap in steps between himself and Delle, curving his arm at the elbow and offering it to Delle. "What do you say, sweetheart?"

She looked at her exasperating lovers; warring titans could still behave like toddlers. Negan with his impatient but amused face, then to Simon, who looked ready to kill his rival. 'Why you callin' him a rival, Delle? Does Negan still have a shot?' She sighed, stepping up one rung and pulling Simon's face to hers, blatantly kissing him right in Negan's face.

Negan's heart about jumped to his throat, grip on Lucille vice like as he watched two sets of lips that should've never met meld together. A hard enough swing would crush both their skulls then and there, but Negan fought the urge, trying to be more civil than his base desires. 'She'll be kissing me again soon enough.'

As Delle pulled away, Simon's eyes were almost black with lust; lust he could not yet exercise. "I'll catch up with you later," she murmured, giving his cheek a pinch. "Don't worry; he's not getting within an inch of fucking me."

Negan chuckled and gave a nod, raising three fingers pressed together. "Scout's honor, Si. Why don't you go help Dwight with my new pet? Get him comfy in his new digs." That easy, wolfish grin plastered his face again, but the soothing kiss Delle had administered acted as enough of a salve to put Simon in line. He took her hand and squeezed it, letting his lanky figure drop back down the steps and towards the cell block; hoping that a little torture would take his mind of things.

Negan was still cackling as he watched his lieutenant skulk off to do his job; he was playing with fire, but it was nothing he wasn't used to. The stomp of boots up the steps stopped his laughter, Delle's hips swaying up to the catwalk and inside. "If you think I'm taking your arm like some ditzy little ingenue you're fuckin' dreaming!" She spat; though his long legs caught up with her quickly.

"Awe c'mon Delle, it's okay to be a girl sometimes; you can take my arm to keep from swooning if you need to," she rolled her eyes as they entered, intending a path for his bleak staff room; he tsked his lips, making her stop. "Little off course, babygirl. We're goin' up to my room."

Her face twisted in a grimace, her lip pulling back. "We're not gonna fuck, Negan. Think I made that pretty clear; or is your hearing starting to go?" She tapped a finger to the shell of her ear; god those
cute little barbs always did it for him.

"Calm your pretty titties, Delle - today was a good day! I want a drink and we're celebrating," her eyes narrowed, but she didn't struggle when his arm draped her shoulders, beginning the walk to his personal quarters. "Gonna review your performance and shit like that; then we'll see if I can't make a liar out of both of us."

"Huh?"

His teeth gleamed like he was about to take a bite out of her. "Don't worry; he's not getting within an inch of fucking me," he mimicked her earlier promise back to her, his head dipping back with a hearty laugh. "We'll see about that."

Shades of black and gray were his color scheme, per the norm for Negan; not much had changed in terms of decor since her last visit, exhausted and on the cusp of letting him in again. She had to keep her wits about her this time. Absolutely had to.

"What cha in the mood for, doll?" He was already at his liquor cabinet, pouring out his classic, predictable whiskey. 'My kingdom for some ice.' "You can take Fang off, n' that jacket must be feelin' stiff."

"You got any scotch kicking around?" 'God I forgot she drinks scotch,' He smiled as he poured a few fingers of her preferred beverage into a fresh glass. 'Always gotta outdo the boys, isn't that right?' He turned to her in her sleeved, scab red top, her jacket thrown haphazard on his sofa, Fang neatly placed atop.

"There you are, gorgeous," he extended the glass to her, setting Lucille into an armchair, propped up like a chaperone of their activities. "Cheers."

She pumped the glass quickly before taking a hefty sip, a deep breath when the burning subsided. "You're a fucking dick, Negan."

He raised a brow, leaning into his sofa and crossing his legs. "Beg your pardon, you little shit?"

"Your hearing really is starting to go," she rolled her eyes, refusing a seat. 'Not yet, bitch.' "You're a fucking dick; that kid didn't do shit, you were gonna cut off his damn arm!" She threw up her own limb for emphasis.

"I wasn't really going to maim the kid," he sighed; he should've known this was coming. "Rick wasn't done yet. I needed him to be dust - now he's dust! And everybody kept their appendages," he was suddenly reminded of the two bodies left headless in his wake from the night before. "Well, almost."

"He's a fucking kid! He doesn't need to pay for what his dad has done." her eyes were hard on him; he knew she had vast experience with shitty parents.

He mopped his hand across his brow, pinching the bridge of his nose. "He's still an Alexandrian," he explained, giving her a pleading look. "And he's at least, what, sixteen? That's old enough to fight. Could've been at the outpost killing my guys for all we know," it was hard for her to imagine; but
maybe those were her mamma bear instincts kicking in, seeing another kid in place of him. Negan seemed to be thinking the same. "Could this may be comin' from a different place, Delle?"

She scrunched her nose, arms crossing as she took a fresh swig from her glass; he was right but she wasn't giving him the satisfaction of knowing that.

She wasn't talking, so he continued. "He seems like a tough kid; copped an attitude like I didn't just pulverize his pals. Reminds me of a little shit I used to teach," he smiled as she blushed. "But we can't be namby-pamby just because he hasn't got hair on his chest yet. They're all the same, Delle."

She downed her drink, setting it on his table. "I know, I'm trying," her hands found her hips. "I just..."

"I know," he raised a hand to bring her closer, letting it rest on her leg. "I know it feels like Fang. But he ain't him."

"I'm well aware of that." She hissed, but her voice was pained.

"Then start acting like it!" He scoffed, a smile on his lips as his fingers ran up and down her hip. "You were amazing last night, babygirl; my dick could've cut diamond when you had Fang at that prick's throat!" She superseded the urge to bite her lip, shift her thighs. "That's the Delle I need you to be out there."

"I'm trying - it's still a process." She muttered; she'd been with him up until the boy. She found issue in herself for feeling so shaken by it as much as issue in him for doing it.

"You've gotta be hard as steel here, Delle. Let these folks see that tender pink under belly and they will stick a knife in without question." She glanced down at his second hand, now spread across her stomach. 'What makes him think he can touch me like that?'

'What, are you gonna stop him?'

"Those soft bits, and that sweet little heart? You save that for me." His hand curved around the back of her knee, desperate to close that gap, reminding himself to go painstakingly slow; but she wasn't exactly dashing away from him either.

She tried to ignore the sparks in her body, the heat he was filling her with; he wasn't getting away with pissing her off again. "I don't have any soft bits left."

"Oh I have to disagree with you there, babygirl," his hand hooked fast, dragging her knees to either side of his legs; level with her tits was one of his favorite views. One wicked paw ran under the hem of her shirt, fingertips barely brushing skin but setting her skin on fire all the same. "You've still got plenty soft bits."

"I'm not letting you off the the hook, Negan," she breathed, watching that hand sneak higher on her chest as the one behind slid up her behind. "You're not gettin' off that easy."

"Oh baby, that's it; you make me work for it." A soft whimper ran from her as both hands massaged her sensitive spots, well trained digits toying at her nipple, stiffening with every pinch. He beamed up at her now flushed face, that look from the RV was seeping back in.

"I-I'm not going to fuck you, Negan." She wanted to remain steadfast in that belief, that she could
resist, keep her promise to Simon, and be good; but when was she ever an angel?

"Kiss me; then we'll see what happens." Lips crashed together and Delle lost her control; two days of raw emotions and concentrated rage meant over sensitivity, and it drove her wild. That tongue against her lips, in her mouth, those teeth tugging on hers, hands pulling her down; maybe one visit to hell wouldn't be so bad. They didn't part, couldn't stop as they shifted positions, her back against the cushions with that massive form over her, splitting her denim legs with his grinding hips; that promise was oh so close to being shattered. He felt so good, his body fitting against hers like a puzzle piece, that broad chest warm and nostalgic under her palms. His breath was hot on her flesh when they parted just long enough to drag her shirt from her skin, the man starved for her flesh in every way; he was descending now, tasting her jaw, throat, the rapid pulse in her neck matching his. 'Fuck this has to happen.'

"N-Negan--?"

'Oh shit. Oh no. Sherry.' The newest wife wasn't quite used to his rules yet. She had a habit of walking in without knocking, no matter the reason; as was the case that day, her eyes wide and filled with malice as she stared at a half naked Delle under Negan's mouth, looking incredibly willing in his arms. Delle's neck had near snapped to gawk back, terror rushing in; this intimacy wasn't for anyone, but the sight of it in Sherry's hands could spell her doom.

She said nothing, only sputtered a moment before leaving in a flash, the door slamming on her exit. "Well damn," Negan sighed, trying to hide a smile. "Cat's out of the bag now." He went to kiss her again but she was zipping to her feet, dressing and gathering her things.

"No its not -- there was no fucking cat to begin with," she stammered, doing up her coat as high as it'd go and slinging Fang over her back. "Go fetch your wife and keep her mouth shut."

"Would it really be all that bad?" He asked; knowing almost instantly he'd said the wrong thing. She glared down at him, throwing her hands up as she moved to leave.

"I'm not sneaking around with you again Negan- and I'm not having Simon find out about the non issue that is what we used to be," she growled, Negan following her to his door. "This isn't a thing anymore--"

"Right. I know that look, Delle," he purred; he caught her hair before she could leave, a passionate, open mouthed kiss landing in the crook of her neck. "Those eyes can't lie to me."

"I can still say no. I can be good." Just like Sherry, she slammed the door on her exit, Negan alone and amused by her final words.

"Oh sweetheart," he sighed. "We were never good."

Chapter End Notes

Phew, I was just under the wire on this one!

Finally have a day to myself tomorrow, can do some real writing and story mapping.
How did we like this chapter? Let me know in the comments, I treasure each and every opinion I read :) ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 68

Chapter Notes

Haven't taken a trip down memory lane in awhile...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Before...

It was Delle's turn to heal.

The police had come by the morning after she was found, wanting a story she wasn't willing to give. The images, feelings, smells and tastes were still too tender and brutal in her head; and she knew to fear the repercussions of what would happen to her life if she breathed a word about who'd attacked her.

"I didn't see their faces," she'd lied, eyes entirely focused on her tented fingers in her lap. "They had scarves up, hats - it was cold. Fought 'em off as best I could but..." her face tightened with the sorrow and trauma she was holding at bay. Fang was at her side, and she wasn't sure if his presence made things worse or better. She was overjoyed to have his hand in hers, that she thanked her lucky stars for; but there was another hand she was wishing for too.

"Let us know if you remember anything else. We'll keep an eye out for any suspicious characters." The law enforcement in their town were none too effective; the snow coating the ground obscured the crime scene, too many unknowns. They came up with every excuse they could for 'didn't want to put in the work'. But then, Delle hadn't mentioned the sexual assault either.

She didn't want to admit she felt embarrassed, stupid and ashamed. The first 3 days of that year she spent admonishing herself for not being smarter, for even going out there in the first place; it was for an unavoidable chore but she found a way to blame herself all the same. The shame came from the feeling that she'd somehow earned what they'd done to her; that all the terrible things she'd done were repaid in a comeuppance that would scar her forever - literally so, the cut on her cheek bone would never heal quite right. She wished for Negan, in spite of all her self loathing, aching to feel something different, something good on her skin - but she didn't know if anything would feel good on her skin again.

It was day 5 post-assault, and Delle was laid up in bed, under direct orders from Fang; he'd become something of a drill sargeant since she'd left the hospital, barely letting her walk two feet by herself. She'd given him an earful when he tried to follow her into the bathroom.

Fang was holding a heaping plate of scrambled eggs - he'd done grocery shopping when he'd come home, the kitchen almost devoid of food - at the edge of her bed, giving her the same look of worry since the hospital.

"You must be hungry, Delle," he was trying his very hardest to sound cheerful, but she knew the sight of her was causing him pain too. "Can you eat some of this? Please?"
She winced a smile, pushing herself up on the bed, leaning against a wall. She took the plate and the fork that came with it in silence; Fang wasn't a bad cook, but it tasted like ashes in her mouth, swallowing it down to appease her brother.

"Thanks, kiddo." She murmured, taking up a sluggish pattern of small bites and strained gulps. Fang still counted it as a win; at least she was eating. It was rare that Fang found himself nursing Delle, but in these circumstances he was totally lost.

"Uhm, Delle, I..." he couldn't look at her, tugging on his long fingers in his lap. "I-I just wanted to say... I-I'm sorry for how I acted, for running away..."

She stared at him in shock, setting the half eaten eggs aside and grabbing his nervous hands. "You stop that right now," she demanded, more spirited than she'd been in days. "You were upset; anybody would've been. This..." she gestured to her black and blue body. "This happened. Shit happens. Sometimes you can't do anything to stop it, and this was just... one of those times."

He was getting misty eyed; as he had in almost every conversation they'd shared since he'd come home. It'd been a difficult weekend, each talk ending in tears and silence before either of them could broach the topic that had sent him fleeing from her side. They hadn't discussed the elephant in the room, the Negan of it all; it was more than awkward, but it had to come out somehow.

And to Delle, right then was as good a time as any.

"We should... we should really talk," she started slow in a low whisper. "About the dance."

A cold brew of emotion shot through him, everything from before the call from police came flooding back; anger, confusion, shame, disgust. He'd been so furious with her, with his Coach - it still churned his stomach to think of his coach that way - the whole night had turned into a black spot in his life. But now, with his sister in front of him, physically beat down by life, he knew shame and disgust were the last things she needed to hear from him.

"We don't have to talk about that right now," he offered, shaking his head. "It can wait."

"No it can't," she admitted, letting her body lean back against her adjacent wall. "You've got to go back to school eventually, and you're going to see him there; I'm not having you get expelled because you can't help from knocking out your teachers."

He grimaced but let that fall into a little smile; he could tell she was trying to be funny. "I can control myself, Delle - I just, I won't see him is all."

She sighed; it'd be easier if he didn't have such an affinity for sports, or such a healthy relationship with his Coach before Delle had fucked it all up. "Can't have that either, champ," she squeezed his hand tight, as tight as tired fingers would let her. "You're too good an athlete, and the scholarships you could qualify for would get you out of this shit hole town."

"But Delle, he--" he let go of her hands to coil his into fists, white knuckled and shaking. "After what he did to you, I don't think I can--"

"He didn't do anything to me," she clarified; she knew it'd be easier to blame it all on Negan, say it was the perverse old gym teacher chasing the hot, young former student - and as much as that was true, so was the opposite. "I get how angry you must be, you're furious; but please, swallow that
hate. You're so much better than this crap shack of a place, so use him to get yourself out of here," she licked her lip and bit it, despite the swelling. "And don't look back."

"Is that what you did?" It was a surprisingly cold question, given the gentility he'd been acting with since his return. "Did you use him?"

She closed her eyes - the second one finally healed enough to open - and took a breath. "No, I didn't use him," 'Just out with it girl, rip off that bandaid!' "I loved him."

She didn't have to see him to know his expression was nonplussed, eyes like saucers. That was the last thing he'd expected to hear. "You... you love him?" Fang had grown up with love, thanks to Delle; it was the strongest kind, fiercely protective, die-for-each-other kind of love. That was how Delle loved - loyally, completely devoted. How could she feel that way about him?

"Embarrassingly, yes," she huffed, crossing her arms to hug herself, wishing for a longer, stronger set. "I didn't mean to, not at first... or maybe I did, before I knew about the ring," she glanced out her window, the world bleak in shades of grey and white. "Lines got pretty fuckin' blurry along the way."

"How... how could you love him, though?" It was a struggle for him to wrap his young mind around. "He's... he's just so much older than you."

She grinned in spite of herself; her mind wandered to his dark hair littered with silver, the lines in his face from years of that smile. Maybe not everybody saw it but age suited him. "Maybe it's all my daddy issues," she joked, though there was probably some truth there. "I don't really know if it's that good of a reason, but he makes me feel... good, I guess? Not normal, definitely not that, 'in no universe am I ever normal.' She confirmed within. "But I can be the person I am around him and he... he loves it. At least he says he does." She shrugged, aware that there was a chance it was all a lie; but for now, Negan felt good, and she wasn't going to deny goodness in her path.

Her brother ran his hands over his face; this was never a talk he expected or wanted to have with his own sister, yet here they were. "He's... he's married, Delle," it was a huge hold up amongst his others; the age, the fact he was her teacher, the lying. It all provided a mountain of reasons he could stay mad, ignore the both of them - but he'd never seen her smile like that before. "He can't..."

"I know," she conceded; she couldn't, didn't expect him to leave his life behind, all he'd made just for her. Even if he'd offered in the past, he'd lose too much - and as a former student, he'd likely never teach again if the truth came to light. "I'm not looking to ride off into the sunset on horseback or anything; I'm just looking for a little happiness." 'What's wrong with a little happiness?' Her demons cooed in comfort.

He gazed at her with a complex mixture of feelings; she was still his sister, the person who'd always put him first, fought for him at every turn, and had been the black sheep, lone wolf for years. Negan was a terrible choice, the worst choice - but she was happy. Could he let go of the terrible in favor of that?

"I'll... I'll go talk to him after school tomorrow," he muttered through grinding teeth. "See what he has to say for himself."

She reached out and ruffled his hair, pleased he didn't recoil when they touched. "If you're gonna hit him, make sure not the leave a bruise," she smiled with a tinge of sadness. "Won't provide any evidence."
He returned her smile, strained and hard though it was. "Good tip; finish your eggs, then did you want a nap? Rest a little?" She returned to her meal but shook her head.

"I've rested enough; maybe we could watch a movie? Cape Fear?" Delle would forever be a fan of thrillers.

He nodded, standing to leave. "Eat first, I'll find the disc," he was at her doorway when he glanced back, his sister a wounded tiger healing her metaphorical and physical wounds - she'd suffered so much and the year had barely started. "I'm... I'm glad you're happy."

Her door shut, leaving her legitimately stunned; both Cornishes were full of surprises it seemed.

______________________________

Nobody was having a good week.

The start of the second semester was the last thing on Negan's mind; through ever lap run by his students, every whistle blown at the end of class, the images of how he found her were all too fresh in his head. He'd resisted calling, even texting, having guessed Fang had showed up as soon as he could; the fact that he'd missed the first two days back to school confirmed that for him. He knew if he got any closer to them in that time it would only make things harder.

It was late; hours past school ending and Negan was still hunched over his desk. A plastic cup of whiskey sat next to his elbow as he tried to smear those pictures from his mind, the blood, the bruising; her skin had purpled so deep it was nearly black when he showed up. 'She bruised so easily.' He thought to himself, massaging the bags under his eyes; he was thankful Lucille was out of town for work, she wouldn't see him not sleeping, aimlessly wandering their house, pining for the woman he loved, useless to do anything. Why'd it have to be this way?

"Coach? 'No way - couldn't be.' A familiar young voice was on the other side of his door, one that had been cussing him out the last time he'd heard it. He gave his red rimmed eyes a quick rub before standing, investigating - sure enough, Eric Cornish was the speaker, a begrudging frown on his features when the door opened.

"Eric," 'No nicknames right now.' He stepped back and aside to allow the boy inside, feeling decidedly more guilty. "Welcome back."

"Hey, Coach," he greeted, swallowing his pride and fury to stand talking to him. "How was your break?"

Immediately Negan's mind went to Delle, spread out underneath him, watching his dick sliding into her in deep strokes over and over; but that was likely not what he wanted to hear. "Oh, uh...fine enough, quiet," 'She's never quiet, you liar.' "I uh... I heard you went to Tony's?"

"You hear that from Delle?" His star athlete's eyes narrowed accusingly. "You been talking to her?"

'Fuck.' Negan felt like a dog who got caught pissing on the carpet; and he was getting his nose rubbed in it, hard. "She um... I went by the bar to see how she was. She mentioned it. 'Then I fucked her across one of the booths, but that's beside the point.'"
Fang pursed his lips but nodded stiffly. "Okay..." he sighed, adjusting the strap of his backpack. "We... so we need to talk about you and her."

Negan nodded, leaning against the edge of his desk and listening. His big mouth wasn't due to spout yet.

"Did you... Why'd you do this to her?" Her brother's voice was angry, but holding back. Negan felt lucky he wasn't already sporting a fresh goose egg on the other side of his jaw.

"I... I just saw her one day," he shrugged, shaking his head. "Long after she graduated, I'm not in this for any creepy pedophile shit - but I saw her and..."

'And you just had to fuck her.'

'You just had to destroy your marriage.'

'You had to taste her.'

'You were a goner.'

'You fell in love.'

"...are you just using her?" He had to ask; he wouldn't let him play with her, he'd kill him first.

"No, no never," Negan was certain of that. "She's... I've hurt her, there's no gettin' around that, and I regret that, I do - but this was never about using her. I just... had to have her."

"She isn't something to be had," the boy snapped back. "She's a person, you asshole."

'Let the boy curse, he's earned it.' "I know, she's a person. She's her own woman and she's made that real clear many, many times," he crossed his arms, looking down to his shoes. "I really... I'm shocked she still lets me come back to her."

"She says she loves you," his focus raised to the boy; there was a new struggle on his face, one of rationalization. Negan was astounded she'd told Fang the truth about her feelings; it'd taken him months to get her to admit it to him, but for her brother she blabbed in less than two weeks. Even still, she must have been certain of that love if she was willing to tell her family; warmth filled his heart in his want to see her. "Do you love her?"

He could've guessed the question was coming, and knew the boy wouldn't completely understand the answer. "Yes," Negan nodded, unable to keep the dopey lovestruck smile from his mouth. "I love her, I really do."

The reply clearly made Fang uncomfortable. "But... why? You're married!" The word stung in his mouth and in Negan's ear.

"I know," Negan ran a hand through his hair. "It doesn't make alot of sense; but I love her... hell I'd leave if she'd let me."

"Who? Your wife?"

"No, Delle," he scoffed into a chuckle. "I'd throw it all away for her, n' I told her that myself; she
called me an idiot."

Fang's eyebrows upturned and a small smile spread on his face. "Well she's not wrong."

"I'm all too aware of that," he was itching to ask, couldn't help himself. "Is she uh... is she okay?"

The smile vanished into a trembling lip, bleary eyes; Fang wasn't great about holding back his feelings. "She... she got hurt."

It felt like a knife twisting in his belly, god he wanted to see her so terribly; but this was tender ground, he had to tread lightly. "I... I know," he rasped, the salt of tears threatening his eyes. "I found her."

Fang audibly gasped, completely agog. "What?"

"I... I was swingin' by to see her after her shift at the bar," he explained, a lump coiling in his throat. "See if she wanted a lift home, it was two in the morning... then I heard shouting."

Fang steadied himself against a filing cabinet, near shaking all over.

"I chased the guys away, didn't get a good look at 'em...but she--" his face contorted in anger, vengeance and despair. "She was bleeding, bruised all over, knocked right out... I threw my coat over her n' called an ambulance, made sure they loaded her up safe..." the kid was openly crying now, Delle likely hadn't gone into much detail on what had happened to her. They stood there for what felt like ages, stewing in the suffering of the woman they both loved so dearly.

"T-thank you," Fang squeaked out, hand wrapped tight around his bag's strap. "It was a cold one that night, i-if you hadn't come along," he shuddered to think of her, unconscious, left out bleeding in the snow all night; she would've died. "You saved her."

Negan felt a little tingle in his spine; it was the first time he'd really considered what might've gone down had he not been there. "Is she... is she going to be alright?"

"Yeah... some scars here n' there," Fang pushed up off the cabinet, straightening himself out. "You... you should call her."

He resisted the urge to faint, raising a brow instead. "Would that be okay with you, sport?"

Fang's lips pursed, his brows furrowing while he shook his head. "I don't understand you both... but she's happy, and I don't want her to lose that. If you bein'... whatever with her is doin' that..." he shrugged and Negan's heart soared. "But if you ever, ever lie to her or hurt her, I will straight up motherfucking kill you."

'There's that Cornish mouth.' Negan thought to himself - though he liked it better on Delle. "I swear, I'll do whatever I can for her. I like her happy too."

There was a silent agreement between them, ironically enough, to keep things silent. In no way was Fang comfortable with what they were doing, but Delle had just been next to death, and after years of sacrifice, she deserved to feel something good. Fang still thought it was a big mistake; but it was about time she got to make some mistakes.

He left Negan in his office, strange notes of giddyness filling his spirit, sliding his phone from his
pocket; he needed to hear her voice.

"Hello? 'Oh, like a siren's song.'

"Hey babygirl," he grinned from ear to ear. "It's me."

Chapter End Notes

I think delles earned a little happy at this point, don't you?

Please leave me a comment n' let me know what you think! I adore reading each and every opinion you all post, it's such a thrill and keeps me writing! ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 69

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Before...

Another popcorn ceiling, another day, but in a very different state of mind.

She'd managed to hobble up the stairs to the upper level of the motel, confirming Negan to be waiting; both had taken to traveling their own routes, less conspicuous that way. The cold of January made each step a little slippery, a little uncertain, but all she wanted was to get to him, sink into his arms and feel sure in something. Though her stress fracture wasn't completely healed and she was still forced - by nurse Fang - to wear a particular shoe to keep it from cracking in half completely, it wasn't going to stop her. She needed Negan.

When faced with the door of the room, the number matching what he'd texted, she felt the nerves hit her; it'd been over two weeks since the attack, and while she was starting to feel better, the marks of what they'd done still remained. Bruises had gone a yellowish-green, some cuts scarring while others weren't yet done with their scab phase; the cut gracing her left cheek was already showing signs of scarring, edges pink and depressed. It'd live as a constant reminder - what would Negan do when he saw it? All of her? Fang had said he'd told him, but how much had he prepared him for? Her heart was racing at a pace she didn't recognize; since when did Negan make her nervous?

"Only one way to find out. 'She told herself; her gloved hand reached up and rapped the door quickly; mere seconds til it opened.

"Delle." His voice sounded warm but hollow, matching the dark of his eyes; he glanced out past her at the setting sun, the deserted parking lot, before grasping her hand and pulling her inside.

"Ow, gentle!" His hand flew away as the door shut while she inspected the mild bruising along her wrist. "I'm fragile now, teach." They shared a smile, but there was an unavoidable tension between them.

"Apologies, sweetheart; I'll try n' be more delicate," he chuckled and moved to the usually unused desk in the room, where he'd set up a bottle of whiskey and a pair of glasses; a few water bottles sat behind that, in case their activities proved vigorous. "Drink? Looks like you could use a stiff one."

She grinned as he winked; the dirty jokes made her feel normal, but the pull of the mending wound in her lip didn't let her feel tha way for long. "Gladly. I mean how else am I gonna deal with your corny old gags?"

"I'm charming as hell and you know it," he handed her a full cup, watching her take a hefty sip. 'Can't say I blame her.' "Been missin' ya, darlin'."

"Awe, feelin' sentimental, aren't we Negan?" He was beginning to realize the change in her, her behavior. Her eyes darted around the room, her hands nervously tapping the glass; moreover she wouldn't meet his eye. "You're such a girl sometimes."
She was practically pacing; the animal in her was freaking out, even if she hadn't noticed yet. "Delle, baby." She stilled as his broad hand cloaked her hip, centering her.

"S-sorry, guess I'm just wound up," she snickered in disjointed sounds, still resisting his eyes and keeping hers glued to her cup. "Been a crazy year so far, I'm just -- I mean, it feels--" she was silenced as he carefully cupped her left cheek, soft as could be, physically pulling up her stare. Those dark eyes were like a wooded forest, somewhere to get lost, somewhere to die happy. There was sadness there, but not pity, kindness, but not condescension; they had her feeling safe and whole.

His thumb brushed the healed edges of her cheek, remembering how her blood poured from it, bright red on white snow in unforgiving moonlight. "I'm sorry this happened to you." he leaned down, pressing gentle lips to hers, apprehensive but needy for her either way. She tensed for a moment, relaxing into his touch and kissing him back; he'd missed the sensation, her taste, the heat of her mouth. It felt natural, normal; until he felt something wet press from her cheeks to his.

He pulled away to see the streaks of tears painting her face, hot and unhindered. The whites of her eyes had grown pink, making the brightness in her irises so much more shocking, shining. "Sorry," she croaked a hoarse whisper; she felt like she was apologizing for a countless amount of offenses, some she couldn't even name. She just felt ashamed. "Sorry."

"Oh sweetheart-- c'mere." His arms enveloped her, her face pressing into his shirt as quiet tears became sobs, a loving hand laced in her hair. She felt as though she was coming apart, and now, more than ever she needed her anchor, she needed him to stay tethered to reality. Even if she crumbled into nothing, she felt assured in that he'd be there when she pulled back together. She let herself go in his touches, firm strokes of her back, petting against her hair, soft words and kisses pressed to the top of her head; she breathed him in and felt welcomed, spice and leather and musk, the hint of whiskey in his breathing. She'd needed him more than she'd imagined.

They stood there for a long while, Delle allowing Negan to sway her softly in his arms, rocking her back to whatever was close to normal for her. Her hand found her face as she pulled away, features puffy and red, face as damp as she shirt she'd cried into. "Fuck," she breathed, shaking her head. "Guess I'm a little more fucked up than I thought."

She looked up into eyes surprisingly wet as his arms enveloped her, her face pressing into his shirt as quiet tears became sobs, a loving hand laced in her hair. She felt as though she was coming apart, and now, more than ever she needed her anchor, she needed him to stay tethered to reality. Even if she crumbled into nothing, she felt assured in that he'd be there when she pulled back together. She let herself go in his touches, firm strokes of her back, petting against her hair, soft words and kisses pressed to the top of her head; she breathed him in and felt welcomed, spice and leather and musk, the hint of whiskey in his breathing. She'd needed him more than she'd imagined.

Warm palms pressed into her thighs, massaging with care and comfort. "D'you remember much of what happened?" His voice was low, careful. "Who do I gotta kill?"

She didn't laugh but offered a little smile, running her hands through his dark hair. "Easy tiger - I've got dibs on those pencil dicks. Won't be a shred left of 'em when I'm done."

His fingers tweaked her chin, that grin she loved building on his face. "That's my little hell cat," she winked back at his words, digging her nails into the back of his neck. "God help the man who crosses Delle Cornish."

This kiss she instigated, hungrier, more urgent. She wanted his loving touch to cleanse the hatred
from her skin, replace all those scars. "Negan," she purred against his lips, nose nuzzling his own. "I think I'm done talking for now."

He was beaming now, eyes darker from arousal that matched hers. "That's fine, babygirl," Those quick fingers moved over her figure, pulling off her shoes - carefully, seeing the difference in footwear - and working at doing away with her fly. "How about I make you scream instead?"

Her back rested against the bed, content to let go and unravel for him. "You can try," she raised her hips as he dragged her denim from her thighs, cautiously peeling them off her calves as not to upset the bandages on one leg. "Just don't bust me up any further."

"Deal." He growled, nearly ripping the violet panties she'd shown up in off her hips; as gentle as he'd try to be, he was more than a little starved for her, and she was offering a full plate. He spread her thighs as wide as they could go without pain, her sex already pinking up and moistening by the second. 'Let's work on that.' He only lifted one leg over his shoulder, letting the other, injured one relax as his face buried into her pussy, drinking in her scent, already forcing a whimper. He chuckled before letting his tongue trace a path from her sweet, silky hole up to that sensitive bud of nerves at the edge of her mound; he knew how to start her twitching.

"Mm... Negan..." she hummed in pleasure, feeling as though she were sinking into a pool of heat, lazy, patient licks coating her folds, exciting her core and getting those juices flowing. She arched into his actions when that lapping turned firm, forceful even, circling her clit and setting her nerves on fire.

"Hush, darlin', just sing me those pretty little sounds you make," he drawled out, barely letting his tongue leave her flesh. He let his mouth seal around her little pearl, suckling hard and drawing out a string of moans and whimpers. "Oh yes, that's perfect baby." He rewarded her primal pleas with oral praise, lapping at the slick pleasure spilling from her hole; something in her flavor was goddamn addictive. He felt her fingers weaving through his hair, pulling him in closer as her breathing grew more intense, every lick and suck driving her closer to where he wanted her to be; a snarl vibrated against her lips and made her jolt, toes curling despite a little discomfort.

"Unh... fuck..." she groaned, her eyes shutting and opening up to the fireworks he was setting off in her mind; Negan was an expert about this, knowing how to ply her pussy into submission. He was already so well versed in what made her unwind when she was coiled tight as a knot. She barely noticed how her hips were bucking up to meet his mouth, twitching and spasming. "Ahh...!" Those lips sealed around bud once more and had her back curving and head thrown back; healing be damned, she needed this.

"That's it, that's my girl," he growled, becoming just a bit more ferocious in his pursuit of her release; he paused to coat her inner thighs with wet kisses, sucking dark spots into her skin, name tags on her flesh of who she belonged to. Satisfied there, he let the thumb of his free hand rest against her clit, polishing pressure coming down on the drenched little pearl, while his tongue slid inside her as deep as it would go; he wanted that essence direct from the source. "Fuck you taste so good." His digit encircled her clit in quick, hard movements, knowing well she liked the added pressure, the extra push while he tongued her deep, her muscles fluttering around him and resulting in a moan if his own; more vocal vibrations against her most sensitive parts. She was right on the edge now.

"F-fuck Negan, I-I'm so close--!" His appendages switched places, tongue slicking her bud with fresh juices as two thick fingers slid home, prodding at that fleshy spot inside her that promised her an orgasm.
"Show, don't tell, baby," her whimpers and moans filled his ears, and as much as he never wanted them to stop, he wanted to feel her come, taste her as she crumbled for him; she was his to have. It took the hooking, scissoring motion of his fingers and his tongue mercilessly attacking her clit to finally push her past that precipice, her pussy clenching around his fingers, muscle spasms of electrical pulses throbbing against his flesh; though his hand stilled his tongue never ceased, hard strokes becoming languid stripes becoming short little kitten licks as the screaming turned to moaning turned to gasping. "That's perfect, sweetheart."

Her body was still tensing under his as he freed her one leg, gingerly cloaking her half dressed form with his own. His brows turned up upon seeing prickles of tears in the corners of her eyes, skin flushed and covered in a sheen of sweat. "You alright, sweetheart?"

"Yeah..." As was the case when he made her come, she was feeling a little loose lipped. "I... I wasn't sure if I could feel that good again." Her hand drew nonsensical patterns against his clothed ribs, her mind still a little hazy.

"Oh, Delle," he mumbled, arms snaking under her to hold her close, his hand pressing her head to his shoulder. "You sweet thing, you - I'm gonna make it so you _never stop_ feelin' good." Kisses lined her skin, a throaty mewl purred against his ear.

"Mm... no complaints here," she sighed; she was trying to keep things light, that was true, but a part of her had been worried. After what happened, she didn't know what to expect; could she even come? Could she even stand to be touched? The tears she shed were happy ones; he'd obliterated her fears like they were nothing; if not for the physical marks, that night would've been wiped from her memory completely. She was giddy, and it had her feeling feisty. "I had no plans to sleep tonight; hope you can keep up."

He chuckled as she tugged his shirt up and over his head and arms; seems she wanted her skin too. "Off to the races then!"

___________________________

It was 4:00 am, and it seemed sleep had other plans for both of them. Bare and spent they held each other, their limbs entangled, slick with exhaustion and satisfaction. They'd clocked in a few rounds of screaming, wild rutting, intercut with gentle love making, their bodies still learning new things about the other's.

"Jee-sus christ," Negan grinned, running a hand up her spine absentmindedly, a sloppy grin on his face. "Think we set a new record, darlin'."

"Surprised you had that much stamina," she teased, her fingertips teasing the tattoos in his skin, the smooth but coarse body hair. "Impressive, old man."

"Was that a compliment from Delle fucking Cornish?" His chest rumbled with a laugh, warming her cheek. "Goddamn I must've struck gold tonight."

"Sure did," she didn't mind letting her walls drop that night. She spent too much energy fighting the rest of the world, keeping herself strong and stone; with Negan she was fine to use her energy elsewhere. She pushed herself up on his chest, letting their eyes meet; sinking into that warm brown like melted chocolate. "Thanks... for tonight," she smiled as he pushed her hair from her face. "I... I really missed you."
"That makes two of us," he tucked his head to brush her lips with his, pressing her head back to his chest. Maybe it was the feeling of her in his arms again, the sight of her injuries; but he was feeling honest and chatty. "I was so worried, doll... then when Fang came n' talked to me I near 'bout pissed myself - thought he was gonna try to beat me to a pulp, tell me not to see you again, tell me you were..." 'dead.' he swallowed thickly, suppressing his worst fear. "Feels like a dream that I'm here. You're here..." he leaned his nose into her hair, sweet and her. "I'd still... I'd still run for you. Burn it all down for you - it'd be hard, but I'm not above hard work. We could be somethin', somewhere else; I hate that folks don't know you're mine. I want them to know. I love you, Delle. Love you more than anything."

He paused; silence. Silent but for deep breaths.

"Delle?" He whispered, twisting his head to look into her face; out cold. 'Fucked her into a coma, goddamn.' He smirked, resting back against pillows and shutting his eyes. 'She doesn't need to listen to me run my mouth right now. There's always time for that.'

Her eyes opened when she heard his dull snores, chest rising and falling with slumbering breaths. She'd heard every word, every promise - stupid though they were, she couldn't help the images of a real life with him that entered her brain. 'Stop being such a ditz. This is fine. This is enough.'

And at that second in time, it was.

Chapter End Notes

Shorter one tonight, but why not let the dramatic happiness live for a little bit longer?

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! I love to hear from each and every one of you, you keep me inspired and writing when I'm feeling burnt out and spent. Love yu guys♡♡♡♡
Chapter 70

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

"Alright... now how about this?"

Delle groaned as a talented tongue ran a circle around her clit, teeth tugging gently before falling into a suck. "Mm, still good bean pole."

Simon grinned up at her from between her thighs, hands lifting her hips as he ravished her like he was famished. She was propped up on his pillows, bare under him as he spent his morning playing with her in whatever ways she'd let him; she'd in fact woken to his mouth on her tits, and far be it from her to starve a hungry man.

"--and this?" He drew out his first word, sliding a finger into her depths, pumping at an agonizing pace, grinning at her open mouth, raised brows. He was being a hellish tease; if he weren't certain to make good on his actions, Delle would've left already. Thankfully, Simon would always come through.

"Unh-! I th-think I like it better when your mouth is busy," she writhed when his tongue met her folds again, laving her little bundle of nerves with brutal attention. "Less time to give me lip."

"Oh, you're cold, Twisted! I thought you liked my lips." His mouth fell open against her mound, an obscene slurping sound mixing with her moans as his cheeks hollowed and tongue flicked against her ruthlessly.

"Ah, fuck! O-okay maybe they're not the worst..." her hands strung through his hair, though he wasn't moving from that spot, not on his life. She was utterly drenched, all for him, and he wasn't about to stop until she was nothing but a puddle in his sheets. Fucking her didn't even enter into his head; he just wanted to make her unravel. "Ugh, yes right there, right there Simon--!"

Three heavy knocks made him pause, but he didn't retract his tongue or fingers. "Simon!" There was Negan's familiar boom from outside; unlike the first few times he'd caught the pair together, Delle was in no hurry to hide away. Negan knew now; he'd be more insulted if they kept trying to lie to him. "Not to put a damper on your precious damn day but we've got business to discuss! Get your dick out of the girl and hop to it!"

"Give me a minute!" Simon called over his shoulder, before his eyes turned practically black, burying his face in her pussy with competitive fervor. She yelped in response, going to cover her mouth when Simon caught her wrist. "Make all the noises you want to, psycho - show him what he's missing." He chuckled as three fingers of his other hand slipped inside, stretching her almost to the point of pain; remedied quickly as each stroked her sensitive spots in different rhythms.

"O-oh fuck, S-Si--!"She let her hips buck against him, his tongue eagerly returning to her folds, less teasing and more intense now, vying for her orgasm. With her thighs tightening around his head, he didn't hear the door squeaking open; but she did. Her eyes widened to Negan standing in Simon's doorway, in full leather, wood and wire ensemble looking like a nightmare. 'This is it, this is how I die -- worse ways to go I guess,' was her first thought, before her vision focused on his grinning and lusty face, tongue flicking across his lips. 'Oh that sick bastard.'
It was hard, obviously, seeing his love in the throes of passion with another man, his right hand man at that; but he was just as hard in his denim at the sight of her. It'd been too long since he'd seen that gorgeous body decked out in pink blush, totally bare, those delicious nipples pert and puffy and ready to play with, mouth parted and wet and eyes begging to be ripped apart. *Fuck she's a goddamn drug,*' He thought as he held the tip of his tongue between his teeth, glaring into her gaze, watching her body reacting to the strumming at her core. *Addictive as hell.*

She was panting hard, groaning with the stimulation, with the eyes on her across the room, the man at her sex. It was extremely overwhelming, new sparks igniting in her; what sent her past the edge was the sight of Negan, letting his tongue slip between his grin and nodding upwards, licking a long strip on air, with a single word mouthed to her in silence.

"Come."

"Ahh--fu-uck!" Her scream was long and drawn out, nails digging into Simon's scalp, eyes shutting tight not to give her voyeur the satisfaction, her spine arching into a sharp curve, shock after shock hitting her like an earth shattering quake. Pleased, unaware of the aid he'd received, he stroked her slow, letting the sensations wane on their own until all that was left were dull after spasms throughout her legs. Her eyes opened to see the door had shut; almost like Negan had never been there at all. *I'm not that lucky.*

"Perfect way to start the day, miss twisted," Simon chuckled, licking the remnants of her climax from his fingers. "Sorry to dine and dash; you know how the boss man can be."

*Boy do I.* She was wrapped up in letting her body relax, her mind still debating over whether the physical or visual stimulation had forced her orgasm; knowing the answer but not wanting to admit it, even to herself. She watched with swimming vision as Simon tugged his khakis over his underwear, digging out a fresh pair of shirts for the day; he favored a sleeveless undershirt that Delle always liked the fit of, before covering it in a button down. "Go see what the big baby wants; I'm going to need a minute before I get on with today."

"That good, huh?" He smirked and leaned down, planting a moist kiss on her lips. "I'll have to do that more often. Don't think you've ever come that hard."

*Well damn I wonder why?* Her devils asked sarcastically. She simply smiled, giving him a wink. "We'll see if you can't beat your record sometime," she yanked his blanket up over her breasts; despite him just seeing her, she knew Negan would try to sneak another peek. "Go forth, bean pole. Save people."

He gave a nod and saluted with two fingers, heading out and letting her stew in an afterglow with complex emotions. Negan was indeed waiting there, raising a brow at the dark hair and pale face tucked into Simon's bed.

"Sorry, chief; can't disappoint my girl," he leered at his leader, unable to keep from grinning like a sly fox. "You know how it is."

*More than you know, dickbag.* Negan half grinned back, tapping Lucille against his shoulder. "Sure do, Simon," he turned on his heel, making for the meeting room. "Let's get on with it; and wipe your mouth, you're covered in pussy juice." He could nearly smell her on his skin and it had him feeling aroused and murderous.
Simon wiped at his mouth and chin with the back of his hand, though not enough to remove her completely, matching Negan's long strides towards their ramshackle staff room, blissfully unaware of the plans ahead. "So, what are we workin' on, boss?"

Negan was grinning openly now, wolfish and commanding. "Well Si, let me tell ya," he held the door open for his second-in-command, letting him step in and settle into his seat at his right before doing the same. "You have just been so goddamn peachy about the outpost goin' to shit, all that crap with Alexandria; really, you're my right hand man."

The praise put Simon on edge; he knew this kind of talk, it was leading to something awful. He could feel it. "Just doin' what keeps all this goin'."

"And above and beyond!" Negan's hand smacked the table in punctuation, the old wood rattling. "Really you reminded me what a solid, dependable guy you are; don't even give me shit for sniffing around your girl anymore. That is loyalty."

Simon ran his tongue over his teeth, under his lip, mulling over if he was quick enough to beat him to a pulp before he could swing Lucille. "I try."

"You don't try, you do," Negan gave a nod. "Just proves to me you're so reliable; which is why you're gettin' that outpost started up again," he watched some of the color drain from Simon's cheeks. "Gotta keep the Hilltop in line, and that outpost is in the prime spot to do so," he snickered at the darkening expression he was getting. "Don't worry, you'll still run their offerings back here once a month, see your girl... assuming she's still yours by then."

His blood boiled and skin crawled; he wasn't balking this time. "If I'm going to the outpost, she's coming with me."

"Aha, well for one, it's not if, you are going to the damn outpost," Negan let his grin fade, a natural, vile look looming in his eyes. "And she stays right here. That's not your shot to call, Si."

"Why would she stay here? Because you want a go at her?" Simon scoffed, ready to fight. "She's not interested, boss. Hate to break it to you."

'God you are blind as a fucking bat.' Negan chuckled before he retorted. "She stays because she's more useful to me than to you. Alexandrians already know she's my little maniac; it'll pay to have her comin' around with her red leather and sour face. I mean," he shrugged, Lucille bouncing. "Why have one big bad wolf when you can have two?"

Simon's lip twitched in response; he figured there was some underlying reason he wanted Delle feared by Alexandria; this was it. "She's useful anywhere," he stood with the intent to go and find her. "And it's more than that. Let's go ask her where she wants to stay, after all she's a big girl, right?"

Negan stood to his words being thrown back at him; but he had ammunition for that too. "Why don't we?" That terrible smile was stuck to his face again. "We'll go talk to her - maybe I can tell her about Oceanside for ya."

Simon felt like he'd been injected with ice water; Oceanside was a dark spot for him. His temper had got the better of him, and a community had paid the price for it. He'd been punished, yes, long before Delle came along; but he knew she wouldn't take it well. "W-what?"
"Oh my, she doesn't know does she!!?" Negan roared with a laugh, stomping his boot. "Boy are you in for it. She ripped me a new asshole for threatening to maybe maim a kid! How's she gonna feel about your little emotional outburst?" He got in tight, right in Simon's face. "Think she'll even speak to you again? After all those men? All those boys?"

Simon's fists clenched; he knew at some point what he'd done was going to bite him in the ass, but he'd never expected it to be over a woman. Let alone one he cared about so much. "She... I..."

"'She...I...'?" Negan had him by the balls now; everything was a resource, but secrets were especially juicy. "Here's what's gonna happen, Si. You're gonna pack up some of your shit - you can keep your room here, I'm feelin' charitable - you're gonna say bye bye to Delle, and you're gonna run that outpost like a good little cog," as angry as he was getting, Negan knew he wouldn't fight back on this. "And maybe she doesn't find out what a stone cold killer you are."

Simon practically vibrated in fury, vicious anger begging to burst forth and tear at Negan till there was nothing left; but he knew Oceanside would spell the end of his and Delle's relationship. He couldn't have her knowing, not that.

"We good, Simon?" His tone was mockingly sweet, saccharine. "Everything copacetic?"

He glared at him so hard he could've burned a hole through his skull. "We're good."

"Fuckin' aces!" Negan declared, clapping a hand on his right hand man's shoulder. "Knew I could count on you, Si. And don't you worry, I'll take good care of your girl," he sneered the last word, sharp and dirty. "Make sure she keeps herself in order."

Simon was furious; but powerless in the situation. There were many things Delle would understand; mass murder was not one of them. He didn't speak another word before leaving, hoping she might still be in his bed for one last fling before his renewed banishment.

She was not.

No, Delle had been cornered by one of the least threatening but most powerful people at the Sanctuary; a bride of Negan. She'd never bothered learning names, only knew the colors; the ginger, the blonde, the brunette with hair so close to her own shade. But this one she knew well; well enough to know that she looked at Delle in total betrayal. Sherry wanted to discuss what she'd seen.

"Well!??" The hatred ripped the voice from her in a sobbing question. "What do you have to say for yourself!?"

Chapter End Notes

Things are moving, people are changing :O didn't mean to leave ya'll on a cliffhanger but here we are.

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment :D I love hearing from all of you, you keep me inspired and writing on time :)
Chapter 71

Chapter Notes

So why did she say?

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

She didn't know why she'd bothered taking the long way from Simon's room that day; maybe she'd hoped to snag some food in the common area, see a little of the humanity that lived because of Sanctuary. Whatever the reason, she was regretting it now. In a side hallway, off from the main drag, Negan's newest wife had pulled her from her path - well, not pulled, but blocked her way, stalked her back like a lion hunting her prey.

Delle didn't feel much fear over the wives; they weren't battle ready, could barely support themselves on their own. True, noone dared to upset them lest they face the wrath of their husband; but Delle didn't feel too much fright over that anymore. It was more guilt and shame that left her avoiding them at all costs; the latest one in particular. Sherry was her deepest regret in the building - even more so than Negan - and seeing her in black, dressed to the nines and utterly miserable was just a reminder of her own cowardice. Yes, if she hadn't run, taken her sister and Dwight and the insulin supply, she'd still be with her real husband and her sister would still have been alive; but if Delle had swallowed her pride and dignity, took one for the team, both of their lives would've looked wildly different. And now, with the scene Sherry had witnessed, their lives were becoming forcibly intertwined again.

"Are you just going to stand there or do you have anything to say for yourself!?"

"...Sherry," Delle tried to sound calm and firm but it came off as authoritative. "You um... what happened isn't what you think."

"Don't feed me that bullshit!" She yelped, manicured hands clenching into fists. "I saw you! He wasn't making you do anything, you were perfectly happy to be there!"

Delle's brows furrowed though her baby hairs were standing on end; this was potentially harmful information to the wrong people. "Please, Sherry; it was a mistake. We were just back, going over plans, I was just...excited."

"Excited!?" Sherry's mouth fell open in disgusted horror. "To...to be with him? That monster!?"

A part of her felt a little flared, hearing someone other than her or himself call him that; she fought off the sparks in favor of diplomacy. "It wasn't him; I mean, it's only that he was there..."

Sherry looked like she was about to vomit. "You're lying," she hissed hoarsely, tears falling now freely. "'only that he was there' - I don't believe you. It's only because it was Negan, wasn't it!?"

'Fucking fuck.' Delle worried inwardly. "Don't think you know what you're talking about."

"No, why else would he treat you like he does!?" She was trembling now, in sorrow and anger. "He
doesn't punish you, you talk shit about him and he laughs it off," her eyes seemed to grow wider and wider with her dawning realization. "He's wrapped around your damn finger -- he's..." she couldn't bring herself to say the words, grasp that he was capable of love at all.

"It's nothing like that, Sherry!" Delle was raising her voice now, anxious. "I swear, he was just a warm body! That's it!"

"I thought he was just obsessed with you," Her conspiracy theory wasn't over yet; not that it was much of a theory. "H-he'd say your name when he was... was in me half the time... all this time I thought you were just selfish, when you were fucking your way to the top," Sherry sniffled. "You're outright cruel."

Delle face twitched in anger; cruelty had never been her motive, especially concerning Sherry and her family. She hated that it looked that way. She hardly cared about the sex, physical gratification could be separate from real lovemaking; but the idea of him calling for her in his most torrid moments struck a chord in her that hadn't been plucked in years. "Sherry this is nuts!" She pushed for her lie. "I don't know what Negan wants out of me, but at the time I really just wanted sex." That's not a total lie. Good for you, Delle, progress.'

Sherry's face was still twisted in sickness and horror. "How would Simon feel about that?"

'Damn. Smarter than she looks. 'Delle and Simon weren't exclusive, she'd made that clear; but she knew he wasn't seeking outside companionship, and she knew his one request of her by heart. "Why would he care?" She tried to play them off as casual. "Not like he's my husband; and I'm not his wife. He doesn't have a lock on my pussy."

Sherry recoiled with revulsion. "You're more than just friends with benefits, anyone can see that; and everyone knows how he is about you and Negan," her voice grew cold. "He should know the truth about how twisted you really are."

Oh Delle couldn't have that. "Or you could keep your painted mouth shut."

"And why would I do that!? You'll have Negan punish me!?!" She was right up in Delle's face, pressing her luck.

"Oh hell no; I'm more than enough to handle you," her voice dripped with bloodthirsty intent; she didn't want to, but if she had to she'd focus her rage on Sherry til there was nothing left of her. "You forget what I'm capable of; guess your gilded cage has broke your fucking brain."

Sherry's hand flew free and caught Delle's cheek hard; she stumbled under the force and searing streaks in her skin. As she gained her bearings she touched the damage, pulling away bloodied fingers. This bitch!" "Oh you're so gonna regret that." She promised and stormed up to her, ready to pounce and tear the wife apart.

"What's goin' on over here?" Of all the Saviors in all of Sanctuary, it had to be Dwight that found them. He wasn't shocked by the scene; he and Sherry openly hated Delle for what her lack of action had done to them, even if he knew their escape had been their true downfall. He didn't wonder what had brought this on; Sherry's anger seemed reason enough. He was more concerned with the three gashes that throbbed across Delle's face, matching his ex wife's nails almost perfectly; even if she had elevated status now, he had his suspicions about Delle's position with Negan. There would be hell to pay if she was hurt, regardless of who'd hurt her.
"Sherry here just got a little riled up," Delle said coolly; she didn't want further attention brought to what Sherry knew. "Girls fight. It happens. How bad do they look?" She traced the edge of one slice carefully; they weren't deep but they stung something awful.

"They'll heal," Dwight declared; but in their world they needed to be watched. Infection could spell death very quickly. "Should get some antiseptic on 'em before they scab."

"Good thinking - you should probably hoof it back to the wives' quarters," Delle gave Sherry a menacing glance before walking to Dwight, entwining her arm with his. "Walk with me, D."

After the RV, the display for Alexandria, Dwight was wary of Delle and what unknown new position she held. He reluctantly joined her on the walk to Doctor Carson's, a sympathetic glance thrown to the woman he wasn't allowed to love anymore.

They wound through the walkways in an awkward, tense silence; there wasn't much either could really say to the other. Dwight knew Delle had claimed some kind of soft spot in Negan, Delle knew that almost anything she said to him would inevitably get back to both Sherry and Negan. Almost everything in their lives was off limits to the other; but they paced along all the same. Delle wasn't comfortable with leaving Dwight with Sherry and her loose lips, anyway.

"...so... first Alexandria run is comin' up." Delle remarked as they neared the doctor's makeshift office.

"Sure is." Dwight had even fewer words to say.

"Think you'll take the new pet with us? See if that helps?" Delle of course meant Daryl; the man who'd been stupid enough to attack Negan and had paid for his arrogance in his friend's life. True that he'd been quick to act, Daryl seemed strong; and if Negan could really turn him, it would be one more power play against Rick and his sorry band of assholes.

"Seems to be the plan." 'Chatty motherfucker aren't you?' Delle scoffed inside; not that it mattered, they were already at their destination. "Lovely stroll, D. We'll have to do this again sometime."

"Mm," he grunted, catching her arm before she could head inside. "You should... you should be more careful about the wives. You're not untouchable, Delle."

She raised a brow and smirked; she never asked for or expected immunity for her actions, but she'd fight back when needed, no matter her opponent. "I defend myself, D. And if you haven't noticed," she gestured to the weeping scratches across her face. "I wasn't the one doin' the touching." She knew better than to laugh in his face; it was more than likely that he'd be privy to the Sherry's secret very soon, and he didn't need more reason to hate her.

"Hey Doc," Delle strode into the medical bay, startling the old, skittish man. "Got any bandaids?" She joked, pointing to her fresh wounds.

"Oh dear," Carson stood and crossed the room, gingerly gripping Delle's chin to inspect the injury. "What happened?"

"Just horsin' around. Was hoping to get 'em cleaned out," the doctor set to work finding rubbing alcohol and antiseptic cream while Delle hopped onto an old examination table. "Would be pretty wimpy of me to die of gangrene when the living dead are starving for a bite of my ass."
He gave a strained little smile, finding the ointments he needed. "I suppose not," he pulled a few cotton swabs from a glass jar, pouring a miniscule amount of the cleansing alcohol onto the little white puff. "This might sting."

"I'm a big girl doc; I can handle it." He nodded nervously, a tiny tremor in his hand as he moved to mop up the blood from her skin.

"Hold up there!" Both Delle and Carson's heads snapped to the doorway; Negan had materialized before them, strangely batless. He almost looked out of breath, wearing a grim tone on his face. "I'll take care of that, Carson."

The old man blinked but stepped aside, setting the still wet cotton ball on a metal tray; though that wasn't far enough for Negan. "Get the hell out of here, Doc. Got words with my psycho here." That got him moving, giving his leader a nod and Delle a forlorn look before leaving them be.

Negan's lips pursed before sighing, shaking his head and taking up to hygienic little ball. "How'd you manage this?" He asked; no preamble, he pressed the swab directly into the cuts, burning but cleaning the streaks.

"These were all Sherry," Delle explained, unflinching with every dab against her wounds. "She cornered me about the other day... after Alexandria."

Negan's stern face broke into a hungry grin, shoulders shaking with a laugh. "Oh right," he acted as if he'd just remembered, as if the sight of her laid out on his sofa wasn't burned into his brain. "Guess she must've given you an earful."

"And a handful," Delle snickered, waving her hand by her cheek; the freshly cleaned cuts stung indeed, but at they were bacteria free at least. "She's angry; not that I can blame her..."

"You can blame her," Negan chuckled, rinsing his hands in the alcohol before squeezing a dollop of ointment onto two waiting fingers. "She knows she's supposed to knock first... hold still."

Her body relaxed as he massaged the antiseptic into her open skin, a soothing sensation replacing the burn. "She seems to think you're in love with me." He stilled at her statement, and she wondered why she'd chosen that moment to bring that up; all alone, his hand on her cheek, barely a few inches between them. 'Good timing, dumbass.'

"I'm that obvious, huh," Negan nodded with a half smile turning up his dimples, Delle trying to push down her urges. "Must be actin' like a lovesick puppy if even she figured it out."

When had her pulse started pounding? She knew very well how Negan felt; how he still felt. It wasn't some shocking realization or reveal, but in such close quarters the admission was exciting her somehow. "She threatened to tell Simon what she saw."

Negan sighed, his eyes focusing on hers after the ointment was well applied. His hand didn't stray far, fingertips rested on her neck, the pad of his thumb drawing circles on her throat. "He'd get over it eventually."

"What, like you did?" She had him there.

"He'd move on if he knew what was good for him," Negan muttered, letting his eyes trace her features; those defiant eyes, kissable lips, the soft skin under his touch. "Its about time he got with the
"You're the only one in the program you fucking geezer," she was lying, but for the time she could convince herself it was true. 'I don't love him, I can't love him.' "So I've... slipped a couple of times. Got nostalgic. Doesn't mean I'm sticking out my hand in marriage or some shit."

"Awe sweetheart, you and I both know what we have is way deeper than marriage," he wasn't wrong - it irked her. A tiny, nagging part of her kept questioning why she was fighting so hard what she knew to be so good; most of the time it was easy enough to quiet down, but it was it's loudest when she was staring into those adoring brown eyes. "You'll come around."

"You sound real confident of that." She scoffed and moved to glance away, but his grip found her chin and held her gaze.

"That's because I am, sweetheart," he smiled but there was something genuine in his speech. "When you come to me - and you will come to me - you're gonna do it on your own. Now I know you won't bend that easy, that's not who you are. You were always tough as nails, ballsy as fuck, frozen heart; I respect that. Hell, I fuckin' love it," his second hand found her hip, but she didn't flinch or wince at the added pressure. "And I want you to stay that way. I don't want you as another pliant little wife; that wouldn't be you. I want all your fire; and I want your love. Back where it belongs."

That racing heart skipped a beat, her eyes wide and astonished by his candor. Negan never danced around his point, he was always blatantly, brutally straight forward; but this was different. This was honesty in himself, cutting himself open and showing his bare heart, even at the threat she wouldn't do the same. It was a brazen trust he offered; she'd forgot how sweet it had once felt.

"But," he continued, running his hand from her hip to her knee. "I'm bein' a good boy about this. You take your time doll; and when you decide it's Christmas morning I am gonna be more than happy to unwrap you," his head dipped, mouth by her ear and heated breath fanning across her flesh and hair. "Besides, the longer my little gift sits under the tree, the more I'm gonna want to play with what's inside."

"Fuck, that shouldn't turn me on. Why is that turning me on? Fucking hell." She couldn't hide the shudder in her body or the heat in her cheeks; he was wearing her down, as much as she didn't want to allow it. The mildest touches brought her back to their early days, before the burden of truth had fallen on them, made her wish for more. She'd normally catch herself, scold herself for letting her heart get the better of her; but in recent days she couldn't get a handle on her wayward wishing, slipping just out of reach and fostering a slow, bubbling love that she'd buried as deep as she could. Apparently, her heart was digging faster than she'd realized.

"What?" Negan snapped her out of her trance, noses almost brushing, eyes boring into hers; between the two was a disturbing, intense opia that would've made lesser lookers shy away. But not them. "Cat got your tongue?"

Her eyes narrowed and she smirked, reaching up and pinching at his scruff coated cheek. "Thinkin' about it, dickwad," she sneered, but wrapped her arms around his neck. "Don't be so impatient."

He grinned. "Sure thing, sweetheart. I'll wait."

Chapter End Notes
Don't worry guys; it is beginning to look a lot like Christmas. ;)

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment!! I love to hear from all of you and your comments keep me inspired and writing fast :) ♡♡♡♡
With confirmation from her doctor, she was alright to go back to work; which meant walking into Salder’s and facing Jordy Pullman. She was fairly certain it’d been him who cracked her ribs, but that didn't mean he wasn't getting a lungful of screaming on sight. He'd be lucky to walk away with his hearing. The Salder's factory stood like an ominous monolith before her, and though she was scared, she was even more angry. Hard steps drew her inside - she could do this.

"You don't work here anymore."

Delle's brain took more than a few seconds to comprehend each word of the sentence, 'you don't work here anymore'. She was stood defiantly in Jordy's tiny office, though with his flippant words she suddenly felt incredibly out of place. "...what did you say?"

He wouldn't even look at her, bear witness to her still healing injuries. "Didn't show up for two weeks. Forfeited your position," he pretended to be engrossed by the logbook on his desk. "You can drop off your uniform with the front desk."

She stared with red clouding her vision, fury shaking her body. "I didn't show up!" She shrieked in a dull hiss. "I-I was in the hospital! Healing after the attempted rape and beating you and your fucking pals shelled out!"

His gaze flipped up to her, disgusted malice painting his ugliness. "I don't know what you're talking about Miss Cornish."

She had to restrain herself from diving across the desk and tearing him limb from limb. "You left me knocked out and bloody in an alley, pretty sure you fucking remember."

Jordy leaned back in his chair, strangely calm as he adjusted his tie. "My friend defended himself when you attacked him. I don't recall being there."

"WHAT!?” She was screaming now, rage pouring out of her unfettered. "How fucking dare you, you pompous lying shit head!? You broke my bones! You scarred me!!"

"You lured my friend out of the bar with sexual promises," Jordy launched into a practiced spiel of his alternative truth. "Then attacked him for no reason. He fought you off and ran."

"You're all sorry excuses for men! Monsters!" She fought hard to keep her eyes dry. "I swear I'm going to get every cop in this town on your asses, you--"

"--and they're going to believe you? Upstart little delinquent, never amount to anything, Delle Cornish?” He hadn't moved but she felt miniscule, abused. "Davey is an upstanding business man now - still has alot of friends in this town. Nobody will have a tough time believing Delle Cornish simply went nuts and bit the guy; hell, you'll probably wind up a joke around here."
Tears were sliding down her face but she did nothing to inhibit them. 'Let him see me cry, heartless bastard.' "You're all scum," she growled like a wounded animal. "You're lower than dirt."

"And you nearly bit a man's dick off," Jordy stood now; he wasn't all that tall but compared to Delle he was a tree, staring down at her. "And everyone will know - hell, Davy might even press charges - if you don't keep your fucking mouth shut."

She didn't care about being a joke; but the threat of police involvement, especially considering her pariah reputation, had her gripped in fear. She couldn't be separated from her family; so what choice did she have here? She could only glare in silence, wishing he was dead.

"You can pick up your last paycheck at reception," Jordy's last words to her that day were short and mean. "If I see you around here for any other reason but returning that uniform I'll call the police." And with that Delle was standing at the Salder's bus stop, somewhat dazed and incredibly aggravated. She felt the need to break something.  

Fang was walking up the sidewalk to their apartment complex when he heard the sounds of ceramic smashing against the ground. 'Uh oh.' As he neared the edge of the building, he could just make out the shattered remains of plates from exactly 10 floors up - their floor - and from a 10th floor window poked a head with long dark hair, swaying in the cold wind. Something had upset his sister.

'I swear to God if Coach did anything to upset her, I'll rip him apart.' He promised himself that as he sprinted up the stairwell to their floor, dashing down the hallway to their door. He heard one last distant crash as he latched their lock. "Delle?"

He heard some scrambling and she stepped out of her room, eyes puffy and red from tears. "Hey kiddo; how was school?"

"What happened?" He asked it gently, but anger and confusion marred his expression. "Is this Negan? What did he do?"

"He didn't do anything," she scoffed, shoving his hands away. "I... I got fired from Salder's."

"What?" Fang was a little more confused; she had every right to be upset over that, but plate breaking normally meant something had driven her up the wall.

"Said I didn't show up for two weeks," she shrugged, feeling the spiteful, poisonous knot in her stomach twisting again. "So they canned me."

"That's not fair!" He exclaimed, setting down his backpack and finally removing his coat. "You were still hurt; I bet the doctors at the hospital would vouch for you, tell them why you weren't there--"

"-- they'll not hire me back, Fang," she sighed and moved into the kitchen; her hands needed to be busy, and it was dinner time. "There's... other stuff at play here."

Fang leaned against the door frame, watching as she pulled ingredients from cupboards, their fridge. "What do you mean, other stuff?"
She paused; her back to her brother, hands gripping the counter so hard the wood might splinter. "It... it was Jordy." She rasped out, fighting back further tears. 'No more crying over that cock gobbling dickwad.'

He still didn't get the whole picture. "What do you mean? Jordy fired you?"

She sighed and started on their meal; a cream soup mixed with noodles can be surprisingly filling when you have next to nothing. "No he...it was Jordy. I-in the alley."

He could've keeled over right there if not for the sheer rage that was pumping through his blood. "That-- he was the one-- I'll kill him." She whirled around, his hands clenched tight and eyes on fire. 'Huh - we've never looked more alike.'

"You'll do no such thing," she stuck her index finger into his chest, cementing her order. "We wash our hands of that bastard and his limp dicked friends--"

"-friends!?-"

"--don't interrupt me. We wash our hands of that bloody mess and we don't go near that bullshit again. It's done, we steer clear."

"No, this isn't right! He has to pay for what he did to you! We can go to the police--"

"We don't have that option," She said it as plainly as her attacker had; it didn't sound any better in her voice. "He painted a really clear picture of what would happen if I said anything - I mean, who's going to believe Delle, local miscreant and heir to the Cornish line of fuckery?" She threw her hands put at her sides. "I can't risk my neck, not if it means leaving you alone."

Fang had never felt so mad, truly skating that edge of sanity. His sister, his champion, robbed of the justice she so richly deserved. "This isn't right."

"I know," she turned back to her cooking, filling pots and getting things bubbling. "I'd gladly hunt them down and rip them apart at a moment's notice, but we don't have that luxury. So we're gonna swallow all that hate," she physically gulped to remember the moment, the feeling. "And we're gonna get on with our lives."

Dinner was eaten in silence; Delle quashed any attempt he made to protest, to sympathize. She wanted the incident at her back, where she could forget about it, or at least try to; Fang was in no such mindset. As much as he tried to calm down, to respect what she wanted, what she'd instructed him to do - nothing - all he could see was red, and the bruises and scars he could make out on her skin seemed to throb in his vision. Sleep came quickly for Delle, emotionally exhausted after such a difficult day; but Fang laid awake in his bed, staring into the ceiling and imagining all the terrible things he wished he could do.

He couldn't let this stand. She deserved closure.

In sock feet on his quietest steps, he snuck into her room and procured her charging cell phone, making a mental note of how it laid so he could place it correctly on its return. He crept out just as quickly, moving like a phantom through their little apartment, kicking on his shoes and slipping out into the hallway. She couldn't hear what he was about to do.
'N' - that had to be him. He opened the text messaging function on her phone, hoping he was still awake.

9:14 - hi can I call u -

He didn't have the same attention to grammar his sister did; but he got a response quickly.

9:15 - Go ahead, gorgeous. -

He pulled a face; the idea of his sister and his coach locked in some romantic coupling still made him sick, but he had to shove that aside. He selected the same number and hit the call function.

"Hey babygirl," Negan was quick to flirt as soon as he answered the phone. "Missin' me?"

"Hi Coach," he heard the older man cough on the other end of the line, caught off guard. "It's Fang."

"H-hey Fang," he corrected his greeting uneasily; their tentative arrangement was still rickety, and that probably hadn't helped. "God I hope this isn't bad news."

"Uh, what can I do for you? Is Delle okay?"

"She..." How was he supposed to answer that? In no way shape or form was she okay; though if asked she'd say she was. Delle had to be strong as stone; but this time, Fang was going to be strong for her. "We need to meet up. Stuff to talk about."

This wasn't the first time a Cornish had demanded to meet with him in the dark of night, where secrets were far less easily spotted; he knew very well it likely wouldn't end as his last meeting had. "Alright... should I come by, or--?"

"No, I'll come meet you," Fang said hastily; he didn't want his coach anywhere near where she might be able to see him. It was a little irrational, but his anger had pushed him past the idea of rational thought. "I can be at the intersection of Sawyer and Mills in 30 minutes."

"I'll be there," Negan's nerves were raw; Fang was being needlessly cryptic, and the absence of Delle's voice from her phone line had him on edge. "Did I... is she sending you to dump my ass? Did I do somethin' wrong?"

As much he wished that was the case, he sighed. "No; I'll explain when I get there."

It was a tense drive for Negan. Even with Fang's assurances that he hadn't ruined his relationship with Delle, he couldn't help his anxiety. With all that had happened to her as of late, he knew she wasn't in her usual head space; and even her usual could be volatile. "Has she finally figured out I'm a waste of her time?" He wondered, navigating quiet, cold streets. "Or that I'm too old for her?" He tried to cool his worries as his headlights illuminated Fang's form, blond hair striking in the night; rather than expect him to get in the truck he pulled over to the side of the road, turning off the engine and hopping out himself.

"Hey champ," Negan gave a quick nod and a wave, that unbeatable smile on his face despite his worries. "Nice night for a mysterious gathering in total fuckin' darkness."

Fang wasn't in the mood for his jokes, not with what he had to ask. "Do you know Jordy Pullman?"

That was a strange question - Negan did in fact remember him, he'd taught him awhile ago; maybe
five, six six years past now? He'd been a decent second baseman and a bit of a douchebag but he didn't remember much else of the guy. "Uh... yeah, he was a student of mine. Decent ball player; why?"

"He's the one who attacked Delle."

All of a sudden his body reacted; skin went ice cold as his blood burned, heart suddenly picking up a raging pace. "What... how do you know?"

"Delle said so," for a moment he was a little jealous she'd told Fang the truth before him; his civil self reminded him he was her brother, her first call. "He was her Salder's boss. When she went in today he fired her."

"Are you fucking serious?" He could hardly believe his ears - Jordy had always been uncouth, but he'd outright assaulted the girl. Negan was beginning to realize what the entitled little bastard was capable of.

"I think he threatened her... said he'd make it sound like he and his friends were defending themselves," he was furious, nearly shaking. "So she won't go to the police."

Negan couldn't really blame her; with the minute interaction he'd seen her have with a cop, he could guess she didn't have the healthiest relationship with the law. Breaking rules was biting her in the ass, and hard.

"She says she's fine; but she's not. She told me not to do anything..." this was a big ask, even with all Fang had on Negan, this favor would mean alot. "...but you could. You could do something."

Could he really? True, Negan could easily take the man in a fight, but the ramifications of brawling with a former student over Delle's assault were vast and dangerous. More than bruises and welts, it would raise questions; questions that were never meant to be asked by prying, public eyes.

"Fang, I can't be goin' around bashin' the guy's brains in; she and I work because we are discrete," despite the logic in his words he wished he could wipe Jordy Pullman off the face of the earth with his bare hands. It was difficult, controlling this anger; but he was trying. "I can't risk losing her over a dick like him."

"You love her, don't you?"

The words had a sobering, if not pandering effect. "You know that I do." Negan replied, lips pursed and hands tight at his sides.

"Then do this for her!" Fang was nearly begging now. "Please, she deserves some kind of justice here, Coach! Do something, or I-- I--"

"Fang," he stepped forward and placed his hands on the boy's shoulders, counting himself lucky he didn't get punched. "I am absolutely fucking livid about this, I really am. I'd grind all of them into a pulp if I could; but Delle needs us to be calm for her right now. We have to give her that." He could feel Fang shaking under his grip; the boy wasn't used to being so furious or frustrated, he didn't know what he should do.

"...I... I'll try," the younger Cornish conceded, letting his head drop. There was only so much the teenage boy could do on his own. "But if I ever see that guy I'll rip his head off."
"Try not to, champ," he gave a grim smile. "Last thing you need is a murder on your conscience."

Fang denied and refused a ride home despite Negan's insistence; he didn't want such close quarters with the man, the truth still too fresh. He hoped the walk home in the cold, brisk air would soothe his anger enough that he could sleep.

Negan, on the other hand, was wide awake, with a sickening fire in his blood, the likes of which he'd never felt. He had a name; that was more than enough to go on. He'd calmed Fang down enough to leave the indecent act to him. He had enough gas in his tank to spend all night driving, hunting down Jordy Pullman and proving he'd fucked with the wrong girl. His girl.

It would be a long night ahead.

Chapter End Notes

Oh no, what cha gonna do, Negan?

So I noticed a bit of a lukewarm response on my last chapter; was there something that put you off? Honestly want to know.

Gonna take a day or two before I post my next chapter, life's been hard lately and I need a little time to write properly.

Til then, leave me a comment!! Getting your opinions really keeps me going! Love you guys!

♡♡♡♡
Simon was gone, to begin with.

Neither had been thoroughly pleased with the fact that Negan was sending him to the outpost again, and Delle could sense an apprehension when she questioned why she couldn't join him. Like most people at the Sanctuary, there was some unknown truth he was not saying; that, however, didn't keep them from going through a few shades of the rainbow in bed before he left.

"I'll be back as soon as I can be," he'd promised, disposing of the red rubber barrier that took them through their 3rd round. "Then we'll see about gettin' you out of here."

That was days ago; and was the furthest thing from Delle's mind, seated next to Negan, pulling up to the gates of Alexandria. He'd about dressed her up like a doll, dropping by her room before dawn to request her red leather jacket and grumpiest face; though waking her before the sun had done that already. She drew the line at the black scarf; weather was starting to heat up again.

"You ready, sweetheart?" Negan grinned beside her, his meaty paw gripping her thigh in excitement; he was so eager to see what Rick had scrounged up for him.

"Let's get to it." She replied, still a hair groggy.

She hung back against the edge of a truck, Fang in hand and menacing, as Negan sauntered up to the doubled gates, whistling like the most carefree man in the world. Three heavy slams of Lucille announced him, like a requiem bell. "Little pig, little pig!" 'Good god does he think he's an actual big bad wolf?' She rolled her eyes before the people of Alexandria could see her defiance. "Let me in!"

A young man with a sneer in his eye answered the gate with indignation. "Who are you?"

"Oh you had better be jokin'!" He chuckled with an edge of a threat. "Negan, Lucille," he raised his precious bat, then directed it back towards Delle. "Little maniac - I know we must've made a strong first impression!"

Before this unknown Alexandrian could stick his foot in his mouth any further, a familiar grey face came crawling up to the fence; Rick was home.

"Well hello there," Negan's grin was nearly busting off his cheeks; Rick looking as stoic and grouchy as ever. He spent just a second too long standing there, not doing what was expected of him, for Negan's liking; he dropped his voice to a low, rolling growl, one that indirectly screamed 'don't fuck with me'. "Do not make me have to ask."

That got the wheels turning, gate sliding away. "You said a week," Rick husked, his southern accent twanging his words. "You're early."

"I missed you," Negan teased. The leather coated pair both caught the sounds of hissing at their backs, a corpse staggering up looking for its next meal. "Oh Rick, c'mon out here - want you to see this."
As he turned, Delle caught the look in his eye, the sinful smile that meant a flex in power. She moved aside, letting her leader line up for a precise swing of his bat, cracking the skull of the starving, living dead.

"HA! Easy-peasy lemon-squeezy!" Delle's mouth twisted in an effort to keep from groaning; he could be so corny at the most inopportune times. But then, what read as corny to her read as sociopathic to others. It worked in his favor here. "Look at that! That's service. We almost get turned away at the gate, do I get mad, do I throw a fit?" He glanced to another onlooker, a familiar face from the night of their lesson. "Do I bash some ginger's dome in?" He delighted as she shuddered. "No! I graciously put down one of these fucks who could've come in here and killed one o' ya'll," he spun his wrist in a flamboyant gesture, tipping in a scornful bow. "Service."

Delle felt the hairs at the back of her neck stand on end as he instructed Rick to carry Lucille; she knew it was a power play, let him get up close and personal with the cause of his friends' deaths, but she wasn't completely confident Rick was as ground down as Negan thought. Not with that look on his face. She tried to shake it, concentrate on her job for the day; it was time for collection.

She watched groups split off as she took on her own, given the task of tossing the houses for whatever could be useful or valuable or just interesting for the Sanctuary. Within these walls Negan was happy to let her off her tight lead, knowing could handle herself more than capably; and that she wouldn't go running off on him or getting herself killed. He kept Arat for the day while Delle wandered off with a younger Savior; a bothersome piece of him prodding him about his and her ages. 'Didn't matter to her then, why would it matter now?' He turned his attention back to the lesser leader of Alexandria. "So Rick, you gonna show me around?"

Delle and her partner had hit paydirt on their second house; what appeared to be their version of an infirmary resided within, chock full of medicines, bandages, and every feasible solution for minor ailments in between. "Hot damn," she grinned, rifling through a shelf of sedatives. "When's the last time I saw a bottle of Tylenol PM?" "Let's get this shit moved out." Negan had been non specific about how much of a 'half' they'd be taking from Alexandria; they'd be done when he said they were done, and medicine wasn't about to be split between the two factions. They could always find more.

A cardboard box full of pills and patches filled her comrade's arms as the went to return to transport, set it aside; but a one-eyed, walking tantrum stood in their way.

"You can't take all that," 'What was his name again? Carl?‘ She raised a brow to the stormy faced teen, his eye angry and disobedient. "You said half."

"Half is a very vague term, kiddo," she replied with a smirk, tilting her head. "Besides, everybody looks pretty healthy here. Well fed, well rested. Who's to say we don't need this more?"

"If one of us gets sick--"

"But noone is sick right now, are they?" He didn't react, likely a yes. "Oh isn't that nice. Then how 'bout this... you tell me when one of you folk get the sniffles, and I'll come rushin' on over with a couple of aspirin. Doesn't that sound heavenly?"

The boy's fury was practically seeping out of him. "You can't do this - put some back, I'm warning you..."

"Warning us? Alright," Delle laughed, crossing her arms. "Let me warn you then. This is your life
now; Negan decides what you get, Negan decides what you do," she fished a random bottle of antihistamines from the box, the rattle amplifying her point. "Negan decides when you get sick. Now," her head dipped, eyes on fire under her brows. "You're in my way."

He was a surprisingly quick shot; Delle's ears rang as the bullet whizzed by her head, the handgun he'd produced from the waist of his pants now hot in his hand. 'Goddamn, the nuts on this kid!' She smirked and let her hands drop to her hips.

"Got that outta your system?" She asked expectantly; she was used to reining in unruly young boys.

"Put some back or the next one goes into you." He had a similar sincerity to his father, though his actions spoke of raw, unrestricted rage. 'Negan could teach him a thing or two.' As if on cue, she saw the flicker of dark leather from outside a window - Negan had heard the shot.

"And then what happens?" She sneered, hearing the door to the house open.

"You die." The intrusion of his father and Negan didn't seem to phase the boy one bit, keeping a steady shot on Delle as they walked in on their little disagreement.

"Carl," Rick's voice was careful, but scared. Negan was doing his job. "Carl put it down."

"No! She's taking all of our medicine! They said only half." She had to admit, she relaxed a little as Negan's heavy step and dark figure entered the room.

"Of course, it'd be you two," he chuckled, sauntering up to Delle's side; she was a little surprised the kid didn't readjust his aim to Negan, still holding her at bay. "Really, kid? Can't play nice?"

"You should go," cold poison dripped from his adolescent voice. "Before you find out how dangerous we really are."

Negan's brows raised, entertained and impressed. He glanced to Delle, who shrugged, before turning back to the little future serial killer. "Well pardon me young man, excuse the fuck out of my goddamn french; did you just threaten me?" His arm curved around Delle's shoulder, tugging her against his side. "I know my little maniac here can be... abrasive, at the best of times, but I cannot have that. Not her, not me."

"Carl, just put it down--"

"Don't be rude, Rick!" Negan stuck a finger in the man's direction for silence. "We are havin' a conversation here. Now where were we - oh yeah, your giant man sized balls! 'Ever the gentleman, aren't you Negan?' Delle could feel a seriousness in him; as cocky as he was, he didn't like seeing a gun pointed at her. "No threatening us."

Young Carl was still not convinced, tilting his head and narrowing his eye. "Listen kid, I like you," he gave her a quick squeeze. "Delle too. So we don't want to go hard proving a point, here - you don't want that. Now I said half, and half is what I say it is," Delle's head jerked to the side in a smug little action. "I'm serious. Do you want me to prove how serious?" He glanced to Lucille and back to Carl. "Again?"

That did it. That word that brought him back to the night at the RV, when he'd lost loved ones, almost lost his arm; and the barely there memory of the shake of a head that had called Negan off. He let his arm drop to his side, but now his eye was on Delle; trying to work out exactly who she was.
"There we go," Negan nodded, letting his hand slide down to her waist, his other grabbing the boy's weapon. "Now, think you ought to apologize to this young lady; must've ruffled her up somethin' fierce, some ornery little kid tryin' to kill her," Carl remained silent, fists twisted tight. "I'm waitin', kid."

"S-sorry." He ground out between his teeth. Carl was not adapting to subjugation as well as his father.

Delle smirked; the power felt good. "No harm done," she turned her head up to Negan, her eyes half lidded. "It's okay Negan, you know how teenage boys can be. All bark before their teeth are even grown enough to bite."

"Heh, now don't get too cocky, princess," he warned in a comforting tone, meaning his words more as a taunt for the Alexandrians present. "This kid's got a hell of a bark."

"So do I." She made a show of bumping her shoulder into Carl's as she passed, giving him a snarky look; but there was something in his expression that felt a little off. Like she was a math problem he didn't have the answer to just yet. She pushed it from her mind and beckoned her partner to follow, get their new supply of meds loaded up; though she paused at the doorway when she heard Carl's headstrong tone again, now towards Negan.

"So what, is she your daughter?" The question made her skin crawl and Negan bust a gut laughing; it was understandable. She was half his age, and she took to his tutelage like a duck to water. On the outside looking in, family is what it might've looked like.

She couldn't decide if the truth was worse.

"Oh yeah, that's my babygirl right there!" Negan teased as he watched her stomp from the house angrily. "My pride and fuckin' joy!" His attentions turned back to Rick and the building curiosity of how many guns they had - that he now had - while Carl tried to work out if it was at all true.

She observed as Negan's team made their way along to a new house, Rick in tow and still holding Lucille like a poisonous snake; Negan was a master in intimidation. With the fresh meds now packed into a supply truck, Delle split from her partner; she knew Negan wouldn't be pleased to have her wandering the community on her own, but it wouldn't kill her to learn the lay of the land. It could even benefit her in the long run.

The houses were all neatly arranged, and even with the place crawling with rough and violent Saviors, it was practically picturesque. It was a lifestyle Delle had never known but had been curious of; the white picket fence, the effortless happiness. 'This isn't any place for me, though,' she reminded herself, striding along and witnessing the cowering native residents. 'Can't keep a wolf in a sheep's coral, no matter how pretty the pasture.' The church was probably the biggest sign of affluence the community boasted; the running water, that would've been a necessity before the end times, but that church stood as a mark of wealth on its property. It was a clear statement that the worship of those who'd built this place was too valuable for common temples; they needed their own. Delle was as surprised to see the nervous priest on its grounds as she had been the day she'd scouted. Clearly, he wasn't just keeping up appearances; this was a believer.

"Hello there, Father," she tilted her head but didn't lose the Neganesque grin on her face walking up to him. "Fine day for an offering, isn't it?"
The man looked as if he was made out of anxiety, like he'd jump out of his skin if the wind blew too hard. "Y-yes," he murmured, forcing a tiny smile onto his features. "God was gracious in his nature today."

She snickered and shoved her hands into her pockets, marvelling at the man. "Wow, you're still buying into the big guy, huh?" She stuck her index finger up towards the sky. "Even with the world gone to shit?"

For what he was worth the little man drew himself up; he seemed like a man who'd had to defend his faith more than a few times. "It's through my beliefs that I've come this far," he glanced to a wandering Alexandrian. "And through the kindness of friends."

"Geez-us, aren't you all sunshine and rainbows?" She sneered, getting a little closer than was comfortable. She was still a few inches shorter than him, but no less dangerous. "Puttin' on a show for a man who's left the theatre."

The priestly man smiled meekly. "This is only an intermission."

'Snappy.' "Heh... aren't you fun. I'll let you get back to forking over your - sorry, our - stuff. Nice meeting you, Father...?"

"Gabriel." 'Fucking really?'

She let the man be, watching him rush away to a different part of the neighborhood. 'This place is ridiculous,' She shook her head, her ears perking and head turning at the sound of a fresh gunshot. 'Fuck what did they do now!?' Quick steps brought her outside of a fancy little walk up, Rick looking as embarrassed as he had before, Negan inspecting the fresh new additions to their armory.

"Did the kid get trigger happy again?" She asked as she slowed, glancing to the upstart's father.

"Just testin' out my guns, sweetheart," Negan reassured her, letting an arm drape her shoulder. "Not bad, Rick, caught my girl's ear pretty damn quick. You got all worried about me, baby?" She wasn't about to admit that she had, the sound of the gunshot sending a chill through her veins. He laughed all the same, but ceased as Arat dragged a portly, bespectacled woman up the stairs of the storehouse. "Arat, we don't do that; not unless they do somethin' to deserve it."

"They're short. Glock 9 and a .22 bobcat."

'Uh oh.'

Negan's expression was darkening by the second; the natural fury that coursed through him was sharpening, becoming the focused razor he needed to teach, to kill. If those guns weren't found, Lucille would be getting a feeding.

The community whipped into a frenzied search for the missing handguns; they didn't need to see another member of their family die. Arat kept the woman - Olivia, apparently - in her grip while they waited, Negan periodically stretching his arms, readying for a possible swing.

"You know I don't want to do this, Olivia," he drawled, giving her a hard, sympathetic look. "But you fucked up, didn't you? Either one of these dumbasses snuck off with some guns and you didn't notice, or you're just shit at your job. Either way," he sighed, rolling his shoulders. "You best hope they find 'em."
Delle merely strolled the surrounding area, noting the actions of the Alexandrians. Some were more motivated than others, those being the ones who'd been present that night. 'Maybe Negan should teach a lesson here,' she considered inwardly. 'Seems like not everyone is actin' right just yet.' But for now, she ignored it, in favor of one of her own being a massive fucking creep.

"Goin' to a party, little girl?" She'd never been a big fan of Davey's; he'd always seemed a little off, a little too pushy. Now he was looking at a girl - a girl just a bit too young - like she was his next meal. He held something of hers in his grip, bright green and clearly valuable to her.

"Please, I just... can I keep them?" She mumbled. Delle wondered if she was the same girl from the forest.

"Say please again, little girl." He demanded, dipping his head far too close to hers. 'Oh hell no.'

"Please." She squeaked.

"One more time." He ran his finger down her cheek, and that was more than enough for Delle.

"Davey," she shouted, striding over like an angry bear. "You want to stop bein' a toothpick-dicked perv and get back to your fucking job?"

He was shaken; Delle was an anomaly of the Sanctuary, something that didn't quite fit with the Saviors, but held high standing nonetheless. "She just, uh... she was hidin' these." He held out his hand, open and displaying her valuables; balloons.

"Balloons? Really Davey?" She grimaced, pulling them from his hand. "You plannin' a career as a birthday clown? Because honestly, you can't afford to get any more creepy," she held the rubber bits out to the girl, dropping them into her outstretched hands. "Enjoy, kiddo. Maybe you can find some for me next time."

She glanced up to see she'd garnered an audience; Carl, that godly Gabriel, her own Savior brothers and sisters, Rick who had a bag clasped in hand now. Most importantly, Negan was staring at her, conflicting feelings over her reprimand. She was being too gentle; but he knew exactly why she was.

Rick had found the guns and spared Olivia her life that day. Finally halfway pleased, Negan gave the ruling to leave Alexandria; it was getting late, and the introduction had gone as well as he'd wanted it to. She sat waiting in his truck, foot bouncing against the floorboards, as he said his goodbyes to Rick; finally squeezing out those words he'd been wanting all day.

"Thank you." Rick had finally managed to spit those out like they were bitterest poison in his mouth, sweetest music to Negan's ears.

"Don't be ridiculous, thank you!" Oh he was swimming in smugness, just rolling in it like a happy dog. Delle sighed and watched from her window; until a brand new dead one came shambling towards her leader. That got her up and out.

"Oh look, another one!" Negan was grinning ear to ear as his little red she-wolf slipped from the passenger side seat, Fang already at the ready. "And Delle's feelin' kind! Aren't you folks lucky?"

With a heavy upward curve she lopped off the monster's head, neck gurgling black blood as the body fell, lifeless, the head still inexplicably gnawing but ultimately non-threatening. "That's my girl!"
She breathed deeply, Negan giving Rick his final words and collecting his precious Lucille back for the day. 'Never gonna forget her,' For the first time in ages she felt a twinge of sadness over that inanimate piece of wood. The memory of the woman they'd both hurt so badly, wrapped in Negan's long fingers day in, day out. 'She doesn't deserve to be forgotten.'

"Let's roll out, babygirl!" Negan spun his hand in the air in his order. She moved to her side of the truck again but stopped under the eye of Rick.

"You've got a bright shiny life here, Ricky baby," she stated, her bright eyes meeting his own. "And you're still lookin' like you've got a mouthful of garbage. Be glad, Rick!" She stepped up into the truck, pointing Fang into his face. "You've been saved."

Negan laughed about that all the way home. She let herself admit she loved that sound.

Chapter End Notes

Was gonna give it another day, but I have 0 self controool ♡♡♡♡

Missed you guys :) let me know what you think of this chapter in the comments! Your words keep me inspired and writing on time.
"So, we should talk," Delle was coiled into a seat at the conference table, twisting a lock of hair around her finger. It'd been a few busy days since the Alexandria trip, mostly spent cataloging inventory and checking the livelihood of the new firearms; neither she or Negan had found the time to sit still since then. Today though, today he'd made a point of dragging her from her tasks and sitting her down. "About Alexandria."

She blinked and gave him a long, perplexed stare. "I thought it went pretty well," he sighed, setting his heels onto the table and crossing his arms. "What? What'd I do?"

He shook his head. "You were soft in front of 'em," he muttered. "With Davey."

"Are you kidding me?" He'd sparked her rage into an instant wildfire. "Davey was being a rapey shit head with a fuckin' child - excuse me for steppin' in."

"Davey was twistin' arms - is he a fuckin' skeeze for doin' it to a kid, yeah, but he got shit done." He dropped his legs and sat forward, his hands animating his words. 'She's gotta see things the right way, here.'

"What shit was that? He was just pissin' them off while gettin' his microscopic dick hard over a 13 year old," she growled, stamping a foot against the floor. "Fuck that guy, and fuck his means."

His hand slid over his hair, trying to massage out an oncoming headache. "I think we can agree that Davey is a colossal dickwad," he conceded that point, but she still had to know what she'd done wrong. "But you cannot go showin' them your sugary side any time one of the boys is an asshole. They see that, they see an opening, they see a weakness. They cannot see a dent in your armor."

"There are no dents in my armor, Negan," she hissed, shoving her chair out and matching over to him; him seated and her standing was one of the few times she was taller than him. "I am no less strong for keepin' Davey's disgusting paws off that girl. Don't you think for a goddamn second that I am not."

"I didn't say that, sweetheart--"

"Oh no you don't get to sweetheart me right now!" Her flames were hotter than hell and licking at his heels. "Your boys are running around, actin' like their auditioning for 'To Catch a Predator'; where'd they get it through their heads they could pull that!?" Her mild accent, not as advanced as his own, always revved up when she was angry and yelling. "You know, the man I remember had some pretty clear feelin's about rape; is that no longer the case in that fucked up head o' yours!?!" She went to point at his skull when he grasped her wrist; the expression on his face told her it was time to shut up.

"You know good and damn well how I feel about rape," his mind flickered with images of blood and teeth, darkness and snow. "I proved that to you. We both know that," he stood but didn't release her arm, towering over her, face in shadow. "But I cannot have you bein' anything but stonecold steel in front of those fucks. I know what's goin' on in here," he spoke softer now, laying his
Her face was deadpan and annoyed. "Quit tryin' to cop a feel," she shoved his hand away, but didn't struggle her arm from the other. "I'll still be the hardest little bitch on your team, but I'm not abiding that behavior. Not when I can stop it."

They shared a combative stare for some long moments, dark eyes trying to dominate unbreakable, lively orbs; they'd shared that look before, one that had never resolved any issues, only proved the stubbornness they both lived in. But once in awhile, in a blue moon, Negan would allow a little leeway. It was hard to say no to her.

"If you're gonna be all blood soaked saintly," he started, letting go of her wrist in favor of her chin, making sure she took what he said to heart. "You do it when I'm around. I know you're a hard ass little psycho, but to the wrong set of eyes you're just an itty bitty little lady who's gentle heart is ripe to pluck."

She could live with that; but faked a gag at his description of her. "You ever call me that again and I'll knock your teeth out. 'Gentle heart' - please, have you met me?" She scoffed, stepping from his grasp.

"Many times," he chuckled, and she knew he was staring at her ass. 'He's like a fucking teenager.' "Just lookin' out for you, babygirl. I am your daddy, according to that kid, Carl, after all!" She hated how entertained he was by that.

"Right, thanks Pops," she rolled her eyes, both at him and the new misconception that she was his daughter. "Mind if I continue on with my day?"

"You got a kiss for daddy first?" He purred, leaning into her ear, waiting.

That kiss wasn't happening. "Fuck you, Negan - now you're being the creep." Her hair whipped around so quick as she turned it nearly snagged on his zipper; but with that, she was off to her own time. As she strayed down the long corridor, she didn't even notice a black clad wife hiding in a doorframe, wondering about what she'd just heard.

'What did she mean?' Sherry was awash with questions. 'The man she remembers?'

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Negan spent most of that day worrying over his little demon. He was confident in her strength, had been for years, but she was fundamentally sweet at her center; despite of how sour and bitter her outer shell was. He loved that sweet center, that little piece that would forgive him when he was the inevitable asshole he was, but it was a danger; he hated the idea of the wrong person taking advantage of that, or worse.

'She'll follow your rules,' His devils reminded him, wandering out to the loading bay to see what his Saviors had drawn in that day. 'She knows how to keep herself alive. She's done it this far.' The prisoner ranks were unloading food, while the properly assigned Saviors saw to sundries and interesting goods. His world ran on clockwork, but not without tremendous effort.

'She's done fine enough surviving without me,' He had thought about this before. 'If it's my ass that gets her killed...' She'd come back into his world hard and cold as ice, and slowly he'd been prying
her sweetness open again; but would that renewed sweetness spell her death?

"Hold up there," Fat Joseph was carrying a load of books; information was valuable in the apocalypse, and they'd take in all they could. But the book his chubby Savior was holding wasn't anything technical, not some practical manual; it was a memory. "Where'd that come from?"

Joseph glanced down to the book's cover and smiled. "Think it's from the Kingdom," he explained. 'That makes sense,' Negan decided. 'They're nearest to that place.' "Guess they thought you'd like the cover."

Negan's grip pulled it from the pile, running bare fingertips over the image of a rampant, snarling wolf. "Nice work, Fat Joseph. Send off word to Gavin, well done." His spirits raised in a giddy feeling, he strode back inside, Delle's room the goal of his journey. 'She's gonna love this.'

Delle found herself a comfortable spot in a quiet stairwell, tugging cling peaches from her second can of the day. The biggest part of her day had consisted of getting reamed out by Negan, her rask having been basic inventory, completed quickly. "Gentle heart," she rumbled through a mouthful of peach. "He's the one who has me on a 2 inch leash. Fuck him, he's soft." Setting the now empty can aside, she noticed a certain stuffiness in the long stairwell; was that cigarette smoke she smelled? 'Shit am I having a stroke?' Leaning over the railing, she could just catch the figure - or rather, figures - exuding the scent. Dwight and Sherry, side by side in secret. 'Oh my.'

She took near silent steps down the stairs, moving as slow and silent as she could til she was in earshot.

"...there's something they're not saying..." that was Sherry, definitely. What was she on about? "...I think she knew him from before..." 'Oh shit.'

"...what good does that do anyone..." Dwight, if he cared, wasn't showing it. "...it's not like she's going anywhere..."

"She could be!" Their voices were clearer the closer she got; and it sounded as if Sherry had it out for her. "If we had proof, take it to Simon--"

"Sherry, even if this is true, even if you tell Simon, what would happen?" Dwight was being surprisingly logical. "If you're right, Negan would keep her locked up tight, she'd never even set foot near another man," 'Well he sure did try.' "And when he finds out you know or tried to use her against him?" She heard him let out a harsh huff of a breath. "I know things are bad now... but pull that and they'll be so much worse."

The way he talked seemed incredibly practical, but Delle had to wonder if he was simply playing a longer game than his ex wife. Sherry's plan was simple, but simple could mean stupid; Dwight might've just been planning ahead, waiting for better information, or at least more of it.

"She can't get away with it! After what she did to Tina--"

"--she didn't do shit to Tina," Dwight countered; Delle was silently touched by the statement. He realized their own errors. "She was scared, but she would've been alive. We decided to run, we decided to steal her meds," he paused and she heard Sherry stifle a sob. "We got her killed. Quit blaming others for the mess we got ourselves into."

Sherry was full on crying now. "How could you say that? After all she's caused, all he's done!??"
Delle thought she heard the sound of a shove. "I'll find out the truth, and she'll pay. She will."

Delle had heard enough. She took the steps just above them with heavy footfalls, announcing her arrival as she turned the corner, both sets of eyes suddenly frightened at the sight of her tiny form, grinning face. "I think my ears are burning," she smirked, head tilting slowly. "What are you two talkin' about?"

Sherry looked as though she might crumble into dust if Delle moved an inch, whereas Dwight's face was more calculating, thinking on his feet. She understood how he'd adapted to Savior life so quickly. "D-Delle..." Sherry stuttered. "We were just talking..."

'Hm,' the way Sherry stared, so terrified, so obedient; it felt good. 'Power through fear; no wonder Negan's such an addict.' "Sounds like you're spreadin' rumors, Sherr-bear," she rolled her head from side to side, tsking against her teeth. "How's that supposed to make me feel?"

"Y-you..." the wife swallowed thickly, terrified of the power this woman held over her husband. "I didn't mean anything by it, it was just talk."

"Is that right?" Delle's face went quizzical, looking to Dwight. "Your thoughts, D? Was that all talk?" She wanted to see if he'd jump to defend his former relation, as well as how quickly he'd answer.

"She's just ranting," Dwight offered, nodding in respect. "Stressed out. Still hasn't got pregnant," Delle's skin bristled slightly at that. "Has her worried, is all. She won't do anything," he glanced to Sherry. "She can't do anything."

Delle mulled over his response; in many ways he was right. She was a wife, which meant sway within the Sanctuary; but she had no means of contacting the outposts. Any interactions she'd have with Simon would be exceedingly limited; and compared to Delle, her relationship with Negan was next to nothing. She nodded slow, calming. "Good. Wouldn't want that mouth to get cha hurt." She snickered and turned to head back the way she came; and Sherry seemed to find her voice again.

"Is he still the man you remembered!?"

Delle's body felt shaken by the wave of emotions that hit her. Fear for her having heard their conversation, anger that they'd been eavesdropped on, love for the man he'd been; not that she'd let any of that show. She threw a carefree smile over her shoulder before leaving the pair behind. "I have no idea what you're talking about."

Delle's heart still raced as she walked a fast step back to her room, considering everything Sherry knew at this point; she'd seen them together, had some idea of their past, and her considerable sway on Negan. So far it was all heresy, there was nothing to prove what she had to say was true; but with her tempestuous relationship and Simon's volatile temper, she couldn't risk even seeds of doubt. Negan could survive with one less wife. Sherry had to go.

She sighed, shutting her door and letting her head rest against the metal. This was never the goal, but Sherry was forcing her hand; it was too much information in the wrong, well manicured hands. She was trying to formate a plan in her mind when she turned, puzzled by a book placed in her bedspread.

"Oh my god." Her breath left her when she retrieved it, the cover revealing words she hadn't read in years:
She tore through the pages, each section split by grades; she sought out the sophomores. With their name, he wouldn't be very far down the list - and there he was.

Smiling in his innocent way, teeth no less vibrant in black and white, dark eyes no less warm and kind, was her brother. They'd even included his nickname in the emblem below the photo, 'Eric "Fang" Cornish'. Tears hit the page around him as all the minute features she'd forgot of his face came rushing back; she could even remember helping him pick out the tie he'd worn in that photo. Suddenly he was there again, more than steel and violence, it was him, flesh and paper.

She was up late into the evening, staring at that picture. She didn't bother flicking through the other pages, to check the teachers' portraits for Negan. She knew his wouldn't be in there.

Chapter End Notes

Ran a little late, sorry!

What do we think, folks? Too angsty? Too shmaltzy? Let me know!!

Love your comments, love your opinions, love YOU! ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 75

Chapter Notes

Get ready for some bloody catharsis...

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Before...

"Jordy fucking Pullman! Is that you?"

Hunting down a man of habits isn't a difficult task; and Jordy had formed a pattern of spending his evenings at Barnes' pub. Like his father before him, the work day wasn't truly over till he tossed back a few beers, or something stronger. A predictable man was easy to find, and Jordy proved that rule.

Negan was stood by his booth, his target at least two drinks deep at that point, greeting him like an old friend; in a way they were, many students of his grew to see him as a mentor and acquaintance with their years on his team. Jordy, thankfully, was no different.

"Coach Negan!" He greeted him with as much enthusiasm as he'd received, not aware it'd been false. "How you doin', man!? Been awhile!"

Negan took his reception as an invitation to sit, which he did. "You're tellin' me," he chuckled, maintaining a friendliness to get what he wanted. "Here I thought you moved away after college."

"Nope, stuck around, workin' at Salder's now," Jordy chose to omit the fact that his father had got him that job. "Doin' alright for myself. How's life with the Timberwolves?"

"Eh, winter, slow season," Negan shrugged; Barnes had hustled his way over to the table to get his order - with Delle away he was scrambling. "Not a bad crew this year, though, some decent standouts..." Fang was the first thing on his mind in that statement.

"Nice, nice!" Jordy had asked more out of courtesy than actual interest. "Say, do you remember when..."

The evening turned to a slog down memory lane after that; Jordy considered his high school years the highlight of his short life, when he was a sports star, girls trailing after him, popular and some might even say handsome. He spouted stories of pranks between his friends, some of their better games, girls he'd flirted with. Negan played along despite the mounting bitter taste time around this man left in his mouth; he had his purpose for all this, knew what he was doing was enormously stupid, but he was still going through with it. He needed to do this for her; it was the one thing he could think to do to soften her pains.

It was nearing one in the morning, Negan barely a drink and a half in while Jordy was near soaked through with seven or eight. He was chortling over some non-joke that had him in stitches, Negan watching in pity and hatred. How had this sorry excuse for a man subdue his Delle, his own personal
force of nature? 'Oh right, he had help.' He couldn't help but to wonder which of his other former students had attacked her, beat her so hideously; he reined it back though, one step at a time. He just needed an in to bring up the Cornishes...

"H-hey, D'you remember that chick a few years under me? Delle Cornish, mouthy little thing?" 'Well, that was easy.'

He didn't give away his memory too quickly. "Hmm... Delle, tiny thing, swore like a trucker?" It was an accurate description.

"That's the one!" The snicker Jordy let loose sent chills down Negan's spine; like a snake slithering around his bones. "She works here sometimes - used to work for me, always throwin' that ass around, askin' for it in those sexy criss-cross stockin's..."

His fist clenched tight as a drum under the table, resisting the urge to bust his glass and shove the jagged edges into Jordy's face. "Patience." "Yeah, she was a cute little lady... her brother is my ace athlete right now," he sipped at his drink. "You've probably seen him play if you've been to a game; Fang?"

"Oh right!" Jordy, like much of the population of their town, would catch a high school ball game when he could. "He's not bad - don't know if he's on my level yet, but he's still young."

'He's twice the player you were, you egotistical asswad.' Negan managed a tight grin and a tighter nod. "He's got alot of potential."

"Yep," Jordy replied dismissively; this wasn't thrilling conversation for him. "So, that Delle, hot as fuck but she's dumb as a post, right?"

'What!' Negan didn't respond, just raised his brows in a motion for him to continue his story. 'I'm gonna rip this asshole limb from limb.'

"She comes to my office today, actin' like she fuckin' owns the place," he was slurring now, probably to the point that he'd remember little about that evening. 'One or two more.' "Hasn't even shown up to her job in two weeks, and acts like I'm the dick for firing her ass!" He smacked the table in disbelief. "As fine of an ass it is..." he added with a sleezy purr.

Oh, Negan was seeing red. In a near empty bar - aside from the exhausted proprietor behind the counter - he bet he could lunge across the table and gouge those eyes out pretty quickly. 'That's not the plan, Negan - stay calm.' "Why didn't she show up for two weeks?" He asked instead of murdering him on the spot.

Jordy sniffled and thanked Barnes as he supplied him with a particularly hard whiskey; a memory eraser if there ever was one. "Well uh... she was bein' this huge flirt on New Year's Eve..."

'Bingo.' "Delle, really?" He chuckled and shook his head, confident in Delle and his relationship. "Never seemed the flirty type. Thought her biggest interest was bein' a shit disturber."

"Oh she still is - but nah, she's bitin' her lips and laughin' all loud and smilin' at us," 'Is that what flirting is to you, Jordy? You poor dumbass.' "Then, then she has the nerve to turn us away at the end of the night! The bitch!"

Negan did his best to play dumb, though he doubted Jordy would notice if he didn't, considering his
sloshed state. "So... you fired her because she wouldn't fuck you?"

The drunken younger man waved his hands in denial, cheeks reddening. "Well, not officially... more because she's a fuckin' psycho."

"Psycho?" He faked surprise. "I mean, she was always kind of wild, but she never struck me as crazy."

"Oh she is!" He persisted, so blissfully unaware of the truth of Negan's prompting. "David - you remember David - he was tryin' to get with her, nothin' big just a blowie--" Negan nearly crushed his glass in his hand at that. "-- and she bites a chunk of skin from his dick off!"

His eyes went honestly wide; he hadn't asked for details of that night, didn't want her to relive it when she didn't want to, but that was quite the turn of events. He hated that they'd got that far, for her to have any man so close to her unwanted, but was proud of her defense. 'She nearly bit a man's dick off?' He stifled a smile. That's my girl. "Holy hell; you gotta be joking."

"No, really! Like she's a literal man eater!" Jordy roared at his quip. "Guy's alright but still; I mean, can't let a little bitch like that get away with that shit."

"So... what'd you do?" Negan asked quietly, watching Jordy down the last of his drink.

"Eh, just showed her some manners; roughed her up a bit. She knows what's what now!" That laughter made him want to vomit, but it was the admission of guilt he needed. There were no further doubts in his mind now; Jordy Pullman needed to be punished.

"Right... hey, this place is shuttin' down soon," Negan offered, kicking his plan into gear. "Should probably settle up..."

"Yeah yeah," Jordy nodded sloppily, waving a hand to Barnes. "Just one more drink."

Oh Jordy wouldn't remember a thing from that night.

But he'd sure feel it in the morning.

There was a light dusting of snow on the ground when they left the pub; it was a sorry kind of snow, the last dregs of winter trying to hold the world in cold before spring came. The sky was blacker than pitch, stars unseen behind a thick layer of cloud; it was a night for doing unspeakable things, a night to forget every sin committed within it. And that's just what Negan planned to do.

He had Jordy under his arm, the man unable to stand of his own volition. He was so far gone it was laughable; still cackling away at nothing, too drunk to notice the alley they were staggering into was the one behind the bar, the same one he'd assaulted Delle in.

"So, that Delle girl... you did it right here, huh?" Negan let the man stand on his own, swaying on the spot and looking decidedly, extremely impaired. Jordy swung his head around, vision swimming in liquor, chuckling and nodding. "You tried to rape her..." Negan tugged at his leather gloves; he wasn't about to bust his knuckles on this pathetic creature.

"N-now hold on, we didn't do any shit like that," he burped, stumbling like a fool. "We - we were just takin' what was owed."
"She didn't owe you shit," 'Careful, Negan - say the wrong thing and it might stick in his brain.' It didn't keep him from shoving him hard, Jordy reacting with a look of indignation. "But I owe you."

Jordy didn't even get a word out as a swift punch to his mouth sent a pair of teeth and gush of blood cascading into the snow; Negan still had a mean left hook. "What the FUCK, Coach!!?" Jordy shouted, clutching his slowly bruising jaw. "What the hell was that for!?" He made to lunge at him, grab him in some unplanned hold, but the drink had slowed him down, allowing Negan a tight uppercut into his chin.

"Need to teach you some manners," he parroted his own words about Delle back to Jordy, his eyes almost as dark as the sky above them. Jordy was hopping mad but still slovenly in his movements; he went for a punch, grazing his ex-coach's arm, but opening himself up for a swift knee to his stomach. "Can't let a little bitch like you get away with that shit."

He was wheezing now, propping himself against a wall; from the way he was holding his stomach it seemed as though he was trying to keep from adding his vomit to his blood on the ground. "I'll f-fuckin' kill you..." he threatened, blundering forward with his fists swinging, a brief blow landing against Negan's shoulder before he all but hoisted the younger man from the ground, held aloft by his collar. "Wha-what, you got some little crush on that cunt!? She's just some dumbass small town whore--" the fist clocked him on the other side now, another tooth losing itself to the ground.

"You don't ever talk about her! Don't you touch her, don't you dare think about her!" Negan roared back, his leather streaked with blood now. Jordy was on the ground now, where Negan sent the heel of his boot into his stomach before crouching, gripping his short hair and pulling him face to face with him. "You are a sad pile of shit excuse for a man, and if I ever hear about you or your pals fucking around with her or any other woman again, I'll bury you so deep they'll never find your fucking bodies."

Jordy was openly bleeding from his mouth at that point; gushes of red coating his chin, his coat. "O-okay," he sounded sheepish but Negan couldn't be sure if he was sincere. "W-we won't do anything like that, I promise."

"I want you to swear," he growled back, grabbing at Jordy's chin, squeezing battered bone. "You swear on your life; and if you go back on it, I will be back to fuckin' collect." Even if Jordy didn't remember a thing from that night, Negan felt some kind of closure in his purpling face, blood on his hands. He'd remember how it felt, he'd feel the change he'd brought on himself.

"I-I swear," he replied meekly, shaking under Negan's grip. He was wolfish in his expression, ready to bite down and tear the flesh from that bastard's bones if he didn't comply. "I swear on my life -- never again."

"Good." Jordy felt a heavy thud and then nothing, Negan's final blow landing across his temple and knocking him out cold. 'A concussion is better than you deserve you bastard.' He thought to himself, reaching into his opponent's pockets and retrieving his keys; thankfully he had a model with a remote unlocker, helping him to locate his car. Jordy would wake up in the backseat of his car the next morning, head pounding and sore in every spot of his body; but he'd never quite remember what brought it on, who he'd fought with. He'd remember seeing Negan, but it'd never occur to that oafish man that his former coach, his idol, had beaten him to a pulp over the girl he'd tried to rape - the same girl Negan was madly, irretrievably in love with.

Negan would spend a few more hours alone in his truck, driving back roads and stretching tense
hands. He wouldn't get home til it was nearly sunrise, sneaking past Lucille's sleeping form to wash away his crimes, scrub leather free of red, and shower off the intense rage and fury that had driven him to such a primal place.

It'd never completely wash away, however. That night awakened something dark in him, a blackness he didn't know he had inside.

Whatever it was, whatever its name, it would lie dormant for now... but it was getting **thirsty**.

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**Chapter End Notes**

Whoo boy did that feel good; if you think I'm goin' too soft here lemme tell ya, there will still be repercussions for what Negan's done here.

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! Love to hear from you guys and it always helps to keep me inspired!♡♡♡♡
She woke up with the yearbook still clutched in her arms, her pillow wet and fully dressed. She'd never expected she'd see Fang's face again, never thought she'd get that chance; and now that she had it she spent every second she could remembering him, the scars she could see and the little lines on his still young face. She could practically hear his laughter with the wide smile he wore in that picture; even in black and white, this was as close to him as she'd ever be again. She held her steel Fang just as close, a physical reminder of how strong he'd been for her when it'd all gone to shit, how brave he'd been. It helped remind her to be the same.

She tucked her new copy of Fang underneath her mattress after changing clothes, slinging her machete over her back; there were no plans to leave the compound that day, but she felt a little naked without him. Hotter weather demanded a loose black tank top under her leather, fully unzipped but kept on at Negan's behest. He liked to have his little clone running around to keep the peace - or lack thereof.

The day didn't promise to be anything special. At most there would be the unloading of supplies from the local communities, fresh offerings for the shelves of Sanctuary. Delle had little interest in that, though; she had a pretty young wife to track down.

It was an unfortunate, regrettable reality; but Sherry had to go. She already knew too much, and if any more info came to light she'd have a rock solid case to chase Delle out of Sanctuary with - or worse. Her thoughts flicked to her casual, mustached lover and his not-so-casual feelings; why oh why did her type have to be power-mad older men who's hearts lived in their dicks? If he caught wind of the truths Sherry held, the seeds of doubt he already had would no doubt bloom; and she couldn't say for sure if she'd be safe if that happened. Negan would try to protect her, yes - but if he couldn't reach her in time, that could end things quickly. *How do I keep getting myself into these messes?* She wondered, coming across Doctor Carson's little office. Frankie had said Sherry would be there, if anywhere, and sure enough she was, perched on the examination table like a kid waiting to be punished.

"Hey Doc," Delle drawled, adopting a sauntering step not unlike her leader's as she walked in. "How goes things?"

"Ah, m-miss Delle," he stuttered; though Carson held some authority at Sanctuary, that was tenuous at best. "Well enough - h-how are those scrapes healing?"

Delle's hand traced the three faded scabs across her cheek and glanced to the woman who'd given them to her. "Oh doin' fine - might even get a bad ass scar out of 'em," she chuckled, but her mission was far from over. "Need a quick chat with Sherry, though. If you could make yourself scarce?"

The Doctor and the wife shared a long look; in her short time married to Negan she'd become close with Carson, who administered her usual pregnancy tests. Either way, he was taking longer than she wanted him to for an answer.

"Sorry, let me rephrase: make yourself scarce. *Now.*" With that sharp tongue Carson got moving, high tailing it out of his own work room, leaving the ladies to talk.
"Hello Delle." Sherry nodded but kept her eyes to her shoes, terrified she might not walk out of the room alive. Delle stared at her hard, taking in her pristine condition, the care all the wives got. 'Why couldn't he just be satisfied with them?' She wondered. 'Why do I keep running back to him?' She glanced to a used, negative pregnancy test on a medical tray; again she felt a bristling in her skin she couldn't explain, but shook it in favor of their conversation. 'No need to worry about buns in whoever's oven.'

"Hey Sherry," she replied, leaning into a wall and shadow. "Thought we ought to chat about all those lies you're spreading."

Her eyes went wide in fear - maybe this would be the day she died. "I'm sorry Delle, I am! I-I don't know what came over me, I just... it was..."

"Stupid? Bitchy? An all out lie?" 'Well two out of three.' "Look Sherr-bear, we all make mistakes - but some mistakes can't quite be undone," she shrugged and kicked off the wall, approaching the other woman. "And while you are wrong, you've been blurtin' shit out too many times, to the wrong people, for me to let this slide. Jeopardizin' my well being here over what?" She threw her hands up in a scoffed chuckle. "Little fight? Jealousy?"

"N-no, I--"

"I wasn't done," Delle continued. "No, you're causin' far too much ruckus for my comfort now. So I kissed your husband once; you gotta ruin my life over that? Nuh-uh," she wagged her finger, now barely a foot from the shivering Sherry. "You've got to go."

Real tears started to flood from Sherry's eyes, down her cheeks; maybe a little part of her felt some relief, knowing death would mean a release from Negan's harem, but it wasn't easy to accept either way. "P-please Delle, I can keep my mouth shut, I won't tell anyone--"

"See, I can't trust that," Delle scrunched her face, another shrug. "Cards on the table, I know you think I've been a massive cunt to you - and in some ways I have been - and I can't have you around spouting bullshit to the wrong pair of ears," Delle's eyes grew hard, furrowing her brow. "So I'm gonna get cha out."

Sherry blinked; she wasn't completely sure she'd heard her right. "Out? Out of Sanctuary?"

"Yup," she raised her brows this time and nodded. "That's what you want, is it not? Get away from this place?"

It was, but it seemed too good to be true. "Why... why would you do that for me?"

"I'm not doin' it for you," Delle clarified. "This is for me. See, I've never been the possessive type, I'm fine with sharing - but the men I seem to attract are not," she bit her lip in mock fear. "And though Negan was one thousand percent a one time thing," 'you lying little snake.' "I know Si would be none too appreciative to hear about it. So - you get to leave, my life stays as is." She popped her thumbs up, then stuck her hand out to shake with an inquisitive expression.

Sherry was wringing her hands, unsure of what to do. She didn't trust Delle, not anymore, but this was as close as she might get to being free for the rest of her life. She'd seen Daryl try and fail at his test mere days before, but then he'd had no help - this time she had Delle, or at least seemed to. Anywhere would be better than Sanctuary. "Okay," she whispered, reaching out and taking Delle's
grip; for such a small woman she had a mean grasp. "When... when would we go?"

"Give me a few days to sort that out," she muttered. "But I'll get cha to the other side of the fence, promise," Delle saw a glimmer of hope behind Sherry's eye; she felt a quick stab of guilt, but shoed it away. 'Has to be done.' 

"I... I don't know if I can get Dwight, too. Last time you two ran Negan had the whole team out for ya."

There was sadness in the woman then, wistful nostalgia. "He's... he's not the man I once knew." Was all she had to say on that. Delle could certainly sympathize there; Negan was miles from the man he'd been years ago. If not for her twisted moral compass or Negan's freedom to change for her, Delle might've been feeling just as Sherry was. She nodded and bid Sherry a good bye, saluting the Doctor as he waited anxiously by his own door. It was a brief few steps before coming across a familiar face and an ear splitting tune.

"Hey Dwight," Delle greeted the lanky blond, stood perched by one of the cells while the grating tones of 'Easy Street' hummed from within. "Daryl?" She pointed to the door and earned a nod. 

"He's tricky," he admitted, staring at the door with a well educated fear. It hadn't been long since it'd been his home. "Willful type."

"So I've heard," she agreed, knowing the man inside the cell was proving difficult for Dwight and Negan. He was a tough old beast of a man, with the kind of strength built out of a lifetime of fighting; but that meant breaking a whole lot more than just a few years against the dead. She had confidence in them, though. "I'm sure he'll crumble eventually... say, D?"

He looked to her but didn't speak, simply waited for her to.

"The other day, with Sherry -- you stuck your neck out for me. I really appreciate it - know it must've been hard, considering..." she let her stare drop for a moment before meeting his again, studying the gnarled skin of his scars.

"Mm," he sighed and shrugged. "She's comin' up with these crazy stories now..." 'Not as crazy as you might think, Dwight.' Her angels were on his side, apparently. "She's not the same anymore... but that's the price we pay I guess. I mean, at least we're not dead." It wasn't exactly a chipper outlook, but it's what kept him going.

Delle gave him a grim smile. "That's the spirit," 'set it up, Delle - make it believable.' "You think it was a one time thing? Or should I be worried?"

"Nothin' to worry about," Dwight was being unknowingly reassuring, as well as buying into a future lie. "Like I said, it's not like she can do anything."

"Right." 'Still has to go, though.'

"But Delle?" Dwight was feeling bold, or maybe he was just frustrated. Heartbroken. "If I find out any of its true; if you've had some secret love tryst set up between you and Negan this whole time..."

His eyes narrowed, making his scars all the more distorted. "I'll go right up to Simon and tell him everything."

Years of lying as a result of Negan had taught her how to hide her initial reactions from her face. "Nothin' to worry about there, Dwighty boy. I've never even looked his way." 'Goddamn are your pants on fire you fibber you!'
Dwight, like Sherry, didn't trust Delle - but with her strange position in the Sanctuary ranks, he couldn't really afford another threat. Instead he just nodded, his attention focusing back to the door. Daryl had to be his main priority for now.

"Well I'll leave you to it. Good luck." She turned to make her way back to the upper levels, find herself a new task.

"Oh hey," Dwight called after her before she was out of earshot. "Heard there's a Negan truck comin' in from Hilltop later. Maybe your boyfriend got you somethin'." The way he said it made it unclear if he meant Negan or Simon; whichever he'd meant it rubbed her the wrong way. She needed to find something to do.

She found it in guard duty. It hadn't taken much to talk Laura down from her spot; it was the middle of the day and the sun was throbbing hot overhead. She was excited at the prospect of some shade, Delle at the prospect of some time alone. It was just her and the AR up there, a sticky, humid breeze coming along now and then; she would've shucked the jacket if she didn't know her shoulders would burn red in the daylight. It was the lesser of two inconveniences to keep it on.

Watching the bustle of the Saviors, workers and prisoners below was somehow comforting; everything ran easily on a good day, smooth and clean and efficient. It was what went on inside Delle that felt messy and complicated. She liked Simon - there wasn't anything wrong with him, in truth - he gave her what she wanted and then some, in exchange for a little jealousy.

Okay, alot of jealousy.

But when it came to Negan... it was getting almost impossible to deny how she felt, how she was falling for him all over again in spite of herself. It was just so satisfying, electrifying when he touched her, knee melting when he kissed her. That crooked, soft part of her was letting him back in through a sliver of forgiveness, and he was feeding off of the ocean of need inside her. She knew that now to be a truth she hated to admit - she wanted Simon, but she needed Negan. The history was too vast, the memories too sweet to not want a taste of the real thing again; and she knew once she had a taste she'd be addicted twice over.

Simon would kill her for how she was feeling, of course. But as far as he knew, that was it - only feelings for now. She thought about breaking things off with him, citing distance as a deal breaker, maybe trying to live as a single woman again; but she doubted he'd be all too obliging in that aspect. And even if he was, Negan would swoop in the second he found out. Theirs was a challenging relationship, putting it lightly.

"How do I always do this, Fang," she had her blade in her hands, turning it slow by the hilt and watching the sun's rays glint off its polished edge. "How do I always land myself in the most fucked up situations... how do I keep bringing out the worst in everyone..." she sighed and took a breath. She didn't want to say it out loud, but she felt it coming; and better here, on her own than in front of anyone else. "Why do I keep falling in love with him?"

In some ways it felt good to say it; a secret given to the wind and air, a weight off her chest to hear it from her own lips while posing no threat of it landing on another's ears. While her admission was all her own for now, that soft center inside wanted Negan to hear her say it, to fall willingly into that sea of blood, power and sex he'd become. Her body was prepared, excited even, to love every part of him, even his worst attributes; but her heart was still mending and her mind couldn't forget. 'We've hurt each other... what keeps drawing me back?" It was a question she'd asked herself many a
sleepless night, before and after the end of days, when all she could see was his smile when she
closed her eyes. *He keeps pulling me in... though I wonder if I ever really got away.*

Her melodramatics were cut short at the sound of machine gunfire; springing to her feet, she ran to
the edge of the building. A transport truck sat at the unloading dock, and from what she could see a
few bodies had been laid out flat. Was that Negan she saw down there? Somebody stood between
him and the apparent shooter, inside the truck. Her heart was racing; she had to get down there as
quickly as she could.

She couldn't tell you why.

Chapter End Notes

Things I learned in this chapter: there is no synonym for the verb of shrug.

How do we feel about this one folks?? I know it's all build up but I'd love to hear your
thoughts.

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! I love to hear your words, they keep mine flowing
fast!
Delle wasn't allowed to spring from her post until a change of the guard; it'd been barely thirty minutes since the shots had rung out, since the shooter - who looked oddly familiar - had been incapacitated and taken inside by Negan himself, but she shot like a rocket down into the building, searching for him everywhere. She even dared entering the wives' quarters, finding them particularly tense and miserable; he'd been there recently.

"He's in his room," Frankie offered, a comforting hand on Amber's back. "He's got some kid with him..."

'A kid?' She wondered, striding as long as her legs would allow to his chambers; as soon as she flung the door free and saw the shaggy hair peeking out from that ratty stetson in an arm chair, she knew. 'Not just any kid.'

"Delle, sweetheart," Negan grinned from his place on the sofa, tickled that she'd found her way there of her own volition. "G'morning. We've got company." He gestured to the boy, Carl, who'd since turned to stare at Delle with the same amount of confusion as she stared back with.

"What's little lord psychopath doin' here?" She asked, feeling a few muscles in her body relax while new ones tensed in their place.

"Oh you're gonna love this," he laughed and curled his fingers to beckon her close, patting the spot next to him. She stood next to the armrest of the couch instead. "This little bastard, he snuck into one of our trucks, rode all the way here, gunned down two of our men, just for the chance to kill me!" He clapped his hands together in front of a chuckle. "Smart little fucker isn't he?"

Delle raised a brow, arms crossing as she surveyed the two men. Had this kid really managed all that on his own? "Not bad, I guess," she smirked at Carl, that mad blue eye sparkling like ice under the brim of his hat. "Clearly didn't finish the job."

"That he did not..." Negan agreed, arms leaning into his knees. "And he's smart enough to know that I cannot let this slide," he stared into Carl's face before letting loose a soft chuckle. "I know I can't - I can't do it. It's like talkin' to a birthday present," he gestured to the bandage that covered a chunk of the boy's skin. "Take that crap off your face, I wanna see what grandma got me!"

Delle's head fully turned to Negan, face contorted in skeptic audacity. 'Fucking really, Negan?' Carl was having none of it either. "No." He sneered.

"Two men!" And back was big bad Negan, roaring when the boy did not bend. "Two men. Punishment," he spoke in the tone he had when Rick had nearly amputated this same kid's arm. "Do you really want to piss me off?"

Delle's fingers dug into her leather sleeves as Carl surrendered to the command, losing his hat and slowly unwinding the gauze that covered the remains of his eye. Why lay underneath was a gaping red hole where a matching blue eye had once been, half healed but still a sore spot for the boy, considering his expression.
"Chr-ist!" Negan exclaimed, peering at the wound with morbid fascination. "That is disgusting! No wonder you cover that up - have you seen it?" Delle watched as Carl's hard exterior started to crack, a tremble in his lip and fear in his eye, and she felt her heart hurt for him. "I mean have you looked in a mirror that is gross as hell! I can see your socket!" He paused, rubbing his hands together. "I wanna touch it - c'mon can I touch it!"

Carl's gaze fell to his lap, obviously hurt by being gawked at like a freak; it caused Delle's hand to swing free, swatting at the back of Negan's head. He swiveled and gave her a look, quickly returned with a harsh glare and nod towards the kid. 'Ah, fuck.' "Damn... holy hell kid, look - I just -- it's easy to forget that you're... just a kid," he shook his head as Delle's annoyance cooled with his apology. "I didn't mean to hurt your feelings or anything, I was just... I was just screwin' around--"

"Just forget it." Carl sniffled and his hard shell was back up. Negan glanced to Delle, who looked less unhappy with him, but only shrugged in advisement. A knock at the door brought an end to the tense moment, Fat Joey at the doorway holding a surprising item; Lucille.

"Sorry to interrupt sir," he murmured, holding Lucille in two hands like he was presenting a king his sceptre. "You left Lucille outside, by the truck."

"Serious?" Even Delle was surprised. He'd forgotten Lucille a few times in moments between she and him, but never with anyone else. "I never do that, I guess a kid firin' off a machine gun is a little bit of a distraction!" He turned back to Carl, trying to salvage the smoldering remains of an almost acquaintance. "All jokes aside, you look rad as hell. I wouldn't cover that shit up. It may not be a hit with the ladies -unless you find yourself a freak like Delle here-" she didn't mind the quip - she did like scars. "But I swear to you, noone is gonna screw with you lookin' like that, no sir."

Again, Carl didn't speak. He was as much a little hard ass as Delle was. Negan pursed his mouth before gesturing to Joey. "Hand my Lucille over to Delle here, Fat Joseph," she wasn't expecting that for a second; in her entire time there, she'd touched that bat maybe once or twice, never properly held it. It felt sacrilegious, the way her hands gripped the handle and pommel, eyes examining that barbed wire up close. Negan laughed, watching her encounter. "Nothin' like a little girl on girl action, right Joey?" The rotund man looked incredibly uncomfortable with the suggestion. "What's the matter, you don't like brunettes?"

He squirmed. "I-I like 'em fine, sir?"

"Bet you do - bet you'd love to watch sexy little Delle here go down on Lucille like there's no tomorrow, huh?" 'Christ Negan that's a bit much.' Delle rolled her eyes and tossed a sharp glance over her shoulder. 'Cool it, you fucking geezer.'

"I'm just screwin' around, man! There's nothin' for her to go down on, c'mon!" This finally got the man laughing before a quick command to leave, which he did.

"So, Carl... what do you like to do for fun? " Negan seemed like he was going through an interview process; only then did the realization begin to dawn on Delle. 'Negan wants a new Savior.' "You like music?" The boy said nothing - he didn't really seem like the 'fun-having' type. "I want you... to sing me a song."

Carl and Delle responded in unison. "What?"

"Yeah! You mowed down two of my men with a machine gun, I want somethin' in return for that,"
Negan stood from his spot, glowering at the boy. "Sing me a song."

"I-I..." Carl was struggling, that much was clear. She doubted he'd heard much of any music in years. "I can't think of any."

"Bullshit!" Negan declared, extending his hand out for Lucille. Delle supplied it quickly, a little relief with giving her back to Negan. "What'd your mom used to sing you? What'd your dad play in the car?" His tongue ran under his lip as he stuck Lucille out to eye level with Carl. "Sing."

"O-okay...uh..." he sighed before launching into the only song he could think of; a lullaby by a long dead crooner. Delle's heart cracked at the warbled lyrics, a song she'd sung to Fang when he was young. The only one she'd known when he was born.

"Y-You are my sunshine, my only sunshine... you make me happy when skies are gray--" he paused in fear as Negan took a few practice swings with Lucille, grunting for effect.

"Do not let me distract you, young man!" And again he swung at the air.

"You make me happy when skies are gray...you'll never know dear, how much I-love you," he watched as Negan sidled up to the coffee table, taking a seat. "Please don't take my sunshine away."

"That was pretty good; wasn't that good, Delle?" She didn't move, simply kept her arms crossed to keep her heart from going out to the boy. "Lucille just loves bein' sung to. It's about the only thing she loves more than bashin' in brains," he smirked, but the kid was obviously still frightened. "Your mother sing that to you? Where is she now?"

Carl merely shook his head; Delle could feel words threatening to tumble from her lips. Maybe now was the time - it might come across as weak, but this boy seemed like needed a little softness.

"Damn...you see it happen?" Negan asked, Carl's eye on his shoes.

"I-I shot her... before it could..." a tear dripped down his cheek. 'Oh god. You fucking sap, Delle.'

"Damn," Negan chuckled, of all things. "No wonder you're a little serial killer in the making."

The words flew free before she had a chance to stop them; she wanted to comfort the boy, but Negan had earned the truth all the same. They both needed her softness in that moment. "Hey kid," he lifted his gaze to her, still sniffing and obstinate. "You're uh... you're pretty brave for doin' that. I um..." 'Fuck Delle, don't you start cryin', this ain't daytime TV!" "I had to watch my brother..." Negan's ears perked but he tried not to move, show how her own mention of Fang had just rocked him to his foundations. "...I watched him get bit, ate, right in my arms... he begged me to give him to the horde, let him die," Negan's heart felt as if a rusty blade was stabbing into it and twisting; for her pain, for her brother, for the cold honor of finally being allowed the real story. "You... you aren't crazy for shortening her pain. Just um...yeah."

Carl blinked up at the young woman, her little speech only making her that much more bewildering. At first she just seemed like a sidekick, then a monster in her own right; but after stepping in to protect Enid and her memory... what on earth was she?

Negan, in the meantime, was working on swallowing the lump in his throat - he'd finally worn her down, and the truth of how she'd lost Fang broke his heart. He'd been too weak to put down Lucille when she turned; based on how she told it, Delle wasn't even given the option. He could only
imagine her pain, watching him fall to the dead, torn apart, losing the only person she had in the world. 'She's still got me,' He drew himself up, standing tall. 'For as long as she'll have me.'

"C'mon, get up," he tried to sound as gruff as possible, focusing raw emotion on the gruesome task he had ahead. "Ought to be ready by now."

"What is?" Carl looked up at him but was just as confused as Delle.

"The iron." Delle's head dipped on instinct; someone had royally fucked up. That was the only time that particular punishment was called for.

They marched along the corridors to the common area where the denizens of Sanctuary were no doubt waiting for their arrival. Delle could feel Negan's eye peering at her from his side, glancing up and giving him a quizzical look. His expression was an unstable mix of emotion; love for his girl, the desire to comfort her, frustration over her gentility and sharing amongst the enemy, all while trying to suppress his old self for the act ahead. It was a grisly work, but it was necessary. Amber had been running around with her old boyfriend behind his back - and he couldn't allow that.

Sure enough, his people had sunk to their knees on their arrival, Dwight prepping the very iron that had burnt him, his scummy little project Daryl looking almost out of place with a yellow mop and bucket. Between them, whimpering and terrified, sat Mark - and suddenly Delle realized what had turned the furnace on that day. Amber had been unfaithful. 'Why does it even matter anymore?' Negan let Lucille's blows against the railing announce their coming, a knell for the terror he would inflict.

"Hold that for me," this time Carl got the honor of taking Lucille, uneasy hands gripping the bat like some foreign object he'd never seen before. Negan turned to address his subjects. "You know the deal. What's about to happen is gonna be hard to watch," he began his descent down the stair, jerking his head for Delle and their guest to follow. "I don't want to do it; I wish I could just ignore the rules and let it slide; but I can't. Why?"

"The rules keep us alive!" The unison response of the Sanctuary citizens made Delle jolt for a moment; it was easy to forget just how powerful Negan was, how tight of a fist he ruled with.

"That is right!" He was on the floor level now, strolling up to the furnace, sliding a safety glove onto one hand to keep himself from any burns. "We provide security to others. We bring civilization back to this world. We are the Saviors. But we can't do that without rules," he glanced to Delle and Carl, making sure they were listening with baited breath. "Rules are what make it all work. I know it's not easy. But there's always work. There is always a cost," Dwight extended the iron to him on a metal hook, and as he took it he turned to the intended victim; Mark. Oh poor Mark, who just couldn't keep it in his pants. Poor Mark, who couldn't follow the rules. "Here, if you try to skirt it, if you try to cut that corner..." he let himself chuckle, the cause an even mixture of requirement for effect and legitimate enjoyment. "then it is the iron for you," he cast his eye around to his people - his wives were at their place of honor, front row center. 'Good.' "On your feet!"

Mark was sobbing now, regretting ever having stepped into Sanctuary; he knew there was no escape from his fate at that point. In Negan's grip the iron glowed on his approach, heat radiating in every direction. "Sorry Mark," he chuckled, squaring his stance over him. "But it is what it is."

The sounds that filled the air were revolting, the hiss and bubble of skin melting, Mark screaming in animalistic tones in unfathomable agony. The stink of cooking flesh and burning hair filled the room, and Carl turned away; only for Delle to catch his shoulder, keep him still. "Watch," she said
low, barely a whisper. "You're better off if he doesn't think you soft." He tried to keep his focus forward as Negan pulled the iron away, skin sticking to the heated metal; at that point Mark was out cold, a puddle of involuntary urine underneath his seat. 'Poor bastard... no exceptions.'

"Ah... that wasn't so bad, now was it?" Negan's question wouldn't be answered, an unconscious, mutilated Mark slumped in his chair. "Damn, pussy passed out. Doc," he gestured for Carson, a regular requirement for these lessons. "I'm all done, do your thing," the iron went back to Dwight as Negan lost the safety mitt. "Well, we're square. Everything's cool," Negan addressed his masses then, deep voice rolling and booming. "Let Mark's face be a daily reminder to him and to everyone else that the rules matter. I hope that we all learned something today, because I don't ever want to have to do that again."

The crowds dispersed, Delle and Carl still perched to the side of the action. She noted the sobbing wife being lead away by her sisters in arms, sympathizing but understanding the need for penalty - but he didn't have to enjoy it so much.

'Anyone would be insane to fall in love with him.' Her angels hissed in disgust.

'So you're crazy.' Her devils accepted.

Negan grinned as he ambled towards them, pleased as punch with the looks on their faces. "Some crazy shit, huh?" He asked Carl, who of course was not inclined to answer as he handed back Lucille. "You probably think I'm a lunatic," 'Well one of us sure does.' Delle thought it but didn't say it. "C'mon, let's figure out what to do with you."

He decided on the locale of the courtyard for further discussion, the sun still hot overhead. "Can I wrap my face up now?" Carl dared to ask, that snark that only comes with teenagers coiling into his words.

"No you may not!" Negan sounded offended, Delle rolled her eyes where away from where they could see her do it.

"Why the hell not!?" Carl, brash and brave as he was, wasn't a fan of getting gawked at by passersby.

"You can't because I'm not done with you. And I like looking at your disgusting, rad-ass, badass eye, so it's staying out," Carl's expression was stormy - more so than usual. It had Negan curious. "What? You got something to say?"

"Why haven't you killed me yet?" 'Damn, no beating around the bush with this little man.' "Or my dad, or Daryl?" Delle was just as interested in his answer; a good opportunity to learn.

"Daryl is gonna make a good soldier for me," Negan explained, Lucille bobbing in his hand. "Your dad, he's already findin' me great stuff. You, on the other hand," Lucille's end was sheer inches from Carl's freckled nose. "We shall see... it'd be more productive to break you," his brow raised and he grinned at Delle, her spine straightening out. "More fun, too."

Delle scoffed audibly, enough to call attention to herself. 'Well fuck I guess I'm in this now.'

"What, you thinkin' that's stupid?" She knew the question was for her, felt the ghost of his breath on the shell of her ear. "What do you think I should do, sweetheart? You know I can't just let 'im go."
She sighed and shook her head, the ends of her hair swishing against leather. "It's up to you boss."

"C'mon darlin', you got me all excited now," he purred, nearly disregarding the kid in their immediate vicinity. "Do I kill him? Melt his face off? Chop off his arm?" The glare out the corner of her eye was so sharp he could've sworn he felt it cut him. "Tell me."

She turned now, pointing to the kid from her folded arms. "He's just a fucking kid," she spoke openly, honestly; didn't even really care that the enemy was right there. "He's just a fucking kid, and it's pretty goddamn clear you're not gonna do shit to him. You like him," she glanced to Carl, again with that mystified look on his face. "Or he entertains you at least. And don't you tell me that Rick wouldn't go off the walls ape shit if this kid goes limping back to Alexandria lookin' like Dwight."

"What makes you think I couldn't handle Rick?" He was honestly curious this time - surely she had more faith in him than that.

She let her voice drop low, leaning up against his ear as she steadied herself on his chest. "I'm not saying that. I'm saying you don't need an enemy of a man with nothing to lose."

"Sweetheart, there's always something left to lose." He smiled but there was a sadness in his words, a worry. His something left was her.

She rolled her eyes. "Then take him home as a power move. You held his son's life in your hands and you gave it back, safe and sound. Show 'em why he should be kissin' your boots."

That, that he could get behind. He laughed and ruffled her hair, turning back to the boy. "Delle has pled your case, Carl! We're takin' you home."

Carl could only manage to blink. Whoever she was, she could make the mountain that was Negan bend.

Chapter End Notes

This one was a lot but really fun to write :) how do we think Delle handled herself here? How'd Negan handle himself?

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! Love your thoughts, love your opinions, love YOU! ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 78

Chapter Notes

Delle exhibits talents Negan didn't know she had...

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Alexandria was the same as she remembered it, if a little barren and forlorn. The members looked a little more gaunt and a lot more leery as their minor convoy rolled past the gates. Negan had whipped up a small crew in short order, Laura, Gary, Arat and Davey pooling into the back of the supply truck and scurrying along with them. They'd be in charge of looking after the community, collecting any new scavenged items and causing general unrest - Negan's goal was Rick.

"So, where's home?" Negan seemed unusually giddy over this visit; like his best friend was showing off their new house. Carl was unsettled and tense - it seemed to be his natural state - but lead them to the house he shared with his family anyway. It seemed the safest choice for Alexandria to keep them happy.

Delle let out a low whistle as they strolled in; even with the unholy ransacking they'd conducted a week prior, the place was swanky. Sure, the house was lacking in furniture, replaced with sleeping bags and pillows on hardwood; but there was something about the make and model of the home that simply screamed affluence. Her whistle called forth an occupant; the same woman who ran the armory and foodstores, looking shocked and instantly anxious at their appearance.

"Where's Rick?" It wasn't asked in any particular cruelty, but the woman startled easy.

"H-he's out-- s-scavenging for you," she squeaked, barely holding it together. "W-we're running really low on everything, we're practically starving here--"

"Starving?" Negan interrupted, as was his talent. "You?" He snorted in derision, giving her the once over. "So by 'practically' you mean 'not really'. 'Real smooth, fucking geezer.' Delle's eyes went to the ceiling in exasperation; the woman was crying now, fogging up her glasses. She cleared her throat, catching Negan's attention and twisting her head with a widening of her eyes.

"What? Really?" He smirked and laughed, but Delle had a way of reining him in with a look - this was that look. "Huh... you people have no sense of humor," he turned back to the sobbing Alexandrian. "What's your name again?"

She smeared the tears from her eyes. "O-olivia." She murmured.

"Right, Olivia," Negan straightened, putting on his most apologetic voice. "I am sorry, for having been so rude to you just now," 'Wow, is that personal growth?' Delle ghosted her brow higher, barely noticeable. 'Guess you can teach an old dog new tricks.' "And it looks like I'm gonna be here for a while, awaiting your fearless leader's return... and if you'd like I think it would be enjoyable to screw your brains out." 'Ah, there he is.'

Olivia gawked at him a moment, total disbelief at the man in front of her. 'Oh c'mon 'Liv, like you
wouldn't climb that like a tree,' Delle's own attraction to him might've clouded her bias. "Or if you're more into the ladies, I'd be more than fine with you n' Delle goin' at it - just y'know, let me watch--" she impressed Delle with how quickly the swat of her hand found Negan's face, cheek reddening with a smack. 'Hot damn, Olivia!'

"I am about fifty percent more into you now," Negan purred and drew a little whimper from Olivia and a snicker from Delle. "But, I think my little bright eyed beauty might be gettin' a bit jealous. We're just gonna put our feet up and wait for our shit to get here. Be a lamb and make us some lemonade?" He swung his arm over Delle's shoulders, tugging her in tight. "We're just parched, and I know I left you some of that good powdered stuff."

Olivia's eyes flickered upwards before affecting that nervous stutter again. "W-well I'm supposed to be--"

"Make it," Negan commanded this time, eyes dark and dominant. "Take your time. And make it good," his other arm, hand coiled around Lucille, curved over Carl's shoulders this time. "Besides, Carl's got to give us the grand tour!"

She and Carl shared a knowing look before she was off to her task. Wonder what that was about... Delle pondered; Carl somehow seemed more nervous there than within the teeth of the Sanctuary. What had him so spooked? "Well go on, Carl," Negan prompted, letting the kid step away from him. "Show us around."

And show he did. Negan insisted on going barefoot on their carpeted floors, playing with every faucet he could get his hands on; he went so far as to challenge Delle and Carl to a game of darts. He was a good shot, Carl's aim leaned to the left, Delle kept skirting the edge. Negan narrowly avoided a dart hurled his way after berating the girl; Carl was still dumbfounded by their relationship.

"What's in here?" Delle asked about a closed door, curiosity having set in.

The color seemed to drain from the boy's face, his freckles blanching. "I-Its just a water heater." He said hastily; neither Savior believed him.

"Seriously kid? Come on," Negan opened the door himself, and what they found surprised both of them. A little girl, barely three, was stood in her crib, golden curls framing her cherubic little face, cooing for attention. "Oh my," he murmured, stepping in slow, grinning at the little toddler; Delle felt a strange twist in her chest as he picked up the girl, bobbing her in his arms. "Look at this little angel; isn't she a little heart breaker?"

Delle couldn't help a smile at the little lady; she'd always had a soft spot for kids. She guessed it came from practically raising Fang by the time she was 5. "Oh just beautiful," Negan found himself taken aback, he'd never seen her around children, but she eagerly scooped the child from his hold, bouncing her on her hip like it was second nature for her. "Your sister?" She nudged her chin towards Carl, swaying the girl slow.

"Judith." He nodded, staring back with tight fists; she couldn't blame him. They were bloodthirsty killers after all; but who could resist a baby?

"Oh she is just the sweetest thing," Delle took on a gushy, babying tone in speaking to Judith, nuzzling into her face and making her giggle. "Yes you are, aren't you little lady?"

There was no denying the swell of love blooming in Negan's chest as she played with the girl; fiery,
demonic Delle Cornish rendered a baby talking puddle of butter at the chubby hands of a toddler. "Never took you for such a softie, Delle." 'Goddamn she's beautiful with her.'

Delle pulled a face as her hand gently pressed Judith's head to her shoulder. "Oh shut up; its a baby, I'm not made of stone."

"I-I can take her." Carl practically dove for his sister, Delle turning away; she wasn't giving her up.

"She's fine here," Delle's eyes narrowed, playing with the girl's hair. "Relax Carl; I won't take her back with me," she smiled and stuck her tongue out at Judith, inciting more giggles. "Or maybe I will; she's a charmer!"

'Jesus christ has she always been this gung ho for babies?' Negan chuckled as Delle marched back downstairs with the toddler, arms protective and possessive like she was fine crystal; it stirred something in him, something outside of him wanting a legacy. "Tell ya what Carl," he piped up, clapping his hand onto the boy's shoulder. "Show me to the men's room round here; let the girls have their fun," he could see the terror in his face, the prospect of leaving his sister with the unreadable Delle was frightening. "Relax, she's not gonna go killin' babies. She's nuts, not heartless."

Delle couldn't recall the last time she'd been so near a baby. The children that lived at the Sanctuary were sweet, but as a rule she avoided them; they were mainly the children of workers, and she was a 'don't look at her, turn away' type when they saw her coming. Judith did anything but, though; she gave Delle a thorough introduction to her favorite stuffed animals and building blocks as she knelt on the floor, feigning amazement with everything she picked up. She wasn't about to spoil the little tyke's fun.

"Bah!" Judith announced, holding up an old but well loved teddy bear; Delle could guess this was a favorite.

"Oh he's so cute!" Delle marvelled, hoisting the toddler up with one arm, the other cradling her bear. "Just like you little sweetpea! I bet you run the whole show around here don't you?" Her smile was genuine, shining down on the child. "The mastermind of Alexandria I bet, oh yes you are," she wriggled her face towards the girl, kissing her forehead. "Bet you'll feed me to your bear if I don't watch myself, am I right?"

Judith simply giggled and clapped; it was refreshing to see someone so carefree. Delle envied her in that respect; even with a brain that couldn't grasp the concept yet, she didn't have to face the horrific creatures and truths the world held. 'Not yet, anyway.' She sighed and handed the girl her bear, stringing a ringlet around her finger. "But you're a little toughie, I can tell. Made to withstand, just like me - bet you'd whip the boys at Sanctuary into shape real quick, too. Bet you'd be runnin' the place in no time."

"Well aren't you two adorable?" Her head snapped up to see Negan in the doorway. He'd lost his jacket, casual white cotton draping his long torso; but what was more jarring was his face. Damp and fresh, his skin didn't bear a hint of stubble - Delle couldn't remember if she'd ever seen him quite so hairless. It made his smile seem wider, increasing by at last ten kilowatts as it shone at her. He must've picked up on her surprise, gently stroking his smooth chin. "What do you think?"

She stood, never releasing Judith, and stepped to him to cup his cheek, skin soft and warm against her hand. She let her fingertips dance over his flesh, studying the unfamiliar familiar face. "Y'know... I think I liked the beard better. Grow it back."
"Tell me that again when my head's between your thighs; you'll learn to like the smooth real goddamn quick."

"Jee-sus Negan!" She chided in spite of the heat in her core. "Damn him. I've got a kid right here!" With a roll of her eyes she slipped free of his hold, talking to Judith again. "Let's go see if we can find your brother!"

Life after the end of the world meant giving up on luxuries and conveniences that were once taken for granted as normalcy. If someone had told Delle at the start of all this she'd be playing with a toddler in an immaculate house, her ex lover sitting outside on an Adirondack chair, watching the world go by, she'd never have believed them - might've even killed them.

Now that it was happening, the utter absurdity of it all kept swirling in her brain as she peekabooed with the daughter of the enemy. None of it made a lick of sense; but for that instant, she was a brief, crazy sort of happy.

She didn't know what brought it on; maybe she was just hungry, maybe it was the unfamiliar domesticity of her situation, but she started on an impromptu dinner. Spaghetti would do; it was her best dish, after all. Shedding her leather, she got to hunting for foodstuffs; what was theirs was Negan's, after all. Rick had a surprisingly well stocked pantry for a community that was "starving" - finding the necessary ingredients to spice up a dented, old can of tomato sauce and stale as all hell noodles was easy, setting to work while barely setting Judith down for a second. The water and salt boiled away any bacteria she might've been wary of, and a hot pan demanded the canned sauce and spices, exercised in her deft hands. It felt as normal as it did foreign; an act she'd all but given up on repeating ever again, muscle memory guiding every sprinkle and stir.

"Holy goddamn shit," Negan's voice would've made her jump if she wasn't so used to his mouth; he and Carl were filtering in through the front door, aghast and agog at the image in front of them. "Since when were you such a homemaker, sweetheart?" As much as it melted him, the sight of his beloved making dinner and coddling a baby as naturally as if she was in her own house - their own house, he wished - it concerned him that such behavior might read too sympathetic to Carl's curious eye.

"I got hungry," she stated dismissively, casting him a look. "Pardon me for cooking." She'd have normally told him off in more colorful language, but there was a toddler in her arms.

"No harm done..." he glanced to Carl, deciding that going along with her prep would make the most sense; and he was feeling peckish anyway. "Carl; fetch us a couple of aprons!"

"What?" This one wasn't as cocky; he was genuinely at a loss.

"Aprons, kid," he repeated, striding over to the stove. "What, don't tell me you think makin' dinner is women's work? What kind of stone age, old fashioned bullshit is your dad teachin' you?" Delle kicked at his ankle and pulled a face, looking to Judith. 'Oh right.'

"N-no, I just--"

"--then hop to it, kid! You got flour, don't ya? Nothin' goes better with spaghetti than hot rolls."

"Wine does." Delle quipped, stirring away thoughtfully. 'Is this what regular life used to be?'
Negan grinned; he was seeing brand new sides to her and lapping them up like a man parched. "Lemonade will do, once Olivia finally gets her ass back here," Carl, in somewhat of a daze, handed Negan the apron he'd asked for. "Great! Now you get on those rolls, gonna see if little miss Delle here is half good at makin' sauce."

What a sight it was; the tyrannical warlord, king of the Sanctuary, his pet maniac and former lover, making a meal with the son of their enemy. The ludicrousness of spectacle was lost on none of them, but nobody brought it up. Carl kneaded and rolled dough quietly, watching Negan and Delle squabble over too much or too little salt; in a world where the dead got up and walked, this was one of the stranger sights he'd seen.

"Carl!" Negan barked suddenly, as Delle was straining the pasta free of water, the boy pulling the finished rolls from the oven. "Take your sister upstairs, wash up."

He looked nervous but relieved at a few moments away from the perplexing pair; he carefully plucked his sibling from Delle's side, zooming up the stairs like he had rockets on his feet.

Alone, Negan could let himself succumb to Delle's wifely side; she was tossing the spaghetti with the sauce, coating it completely when she felt his front press against her back, wide hands settling on her hips. "What do you want, you fucking geezer?" She muttered, trying to ignore the obvious.

"I like you like this," he purred, dipping his head to hers, words breezing against her ear. "Never really got to see this part of you... it's hot," she stifled herself as felt an indisputable hardness against the arch of her back. "Feels right."

"Shut up," No matter how gentle she acted, that tongue was always razor sharp. "I'm not about to drop everything and play your little housewife. You've got plenty of those."

"Only got one you, though," he hummed, lips pressing kisses against the exposed bits of skin he could reach. He smiled as he saw her flesh prickle with his actions. "And you... bouncing that baby on your hip, makin' me dinner... hot damn if you don't have my blood boilin'."

'Stop it, Delle!' She paid no attention to her angels pleas as she pressed back against him; she might've said involuntarily, but who could say for sure? "Hush," she muttered again, breathy and needy this time. "You're bein' ridiculous. Those kids are just upstairs - and we're surrounded by the enemy!"

"Don't care," he husked; he spun her in her spot, arms curving around her sides to pull her in close. "You're bewitchin' me, Delle. Got me wanting to fulfil my husbandly duties." Those learned fingers wove into her hair, pulling her face to his and lips together. She allowed a soft groan to reverberate off his mouth, the tang of tomato sauce faint on him, but stronger on his tongue as it slipped between her lips. She felt her body surrendering to muscle memory again as he lifted her up onto the adjacent counter, legs wrapping his hips on instinct, clothed cores pressed up against each other and dying for a reunion. 'Fuck, he tastes so good,' She twisted her fingers into the white cotton of his shirt, didn't even mind his rough digits sliding up the smooth skin of her back. 'Delicious...'

The clearing of a throat and a gasp made her pause, pulling back a fraction with her arms around his head; Carl and Olivia were staring, nonplussed and dumbstruck at the ridiculous scene before them. Delle relaxed her grip and was panting hard; not from overexertion, maybe anticipation, frustration, or perhaps it was fear. The wrong people knew the wrong things now.

"We ain't runnin' a free show here," Negan grumbled, sensing her apprehension. "I'd get on that
"lemonade, doll," he straightened as Delle hopped off the counter, setting up the final touches on the meal. "Carl, set the table."

It was more than an odd picture. Negan sat at the head of the table, Carl at his left, Delle at his right; Olivia held Judith now, curving around her tiny body as if to shield her from the woman beside her. An empty setting sat at the end of the table, a place for Rick who had yet to appear; and Negan was getting impatient. "I'm not waitin' for your dad anymore," he announced it like an upset child. "It's gettin' late and I think we're all pretty starvin'," He smirked at Olivia as she shrank with his words. "Carl, pass the rolls," the boy simply stared back at him, barely registering what he'd said. "Please?" He added threateningly, brows raising. Once Negan took his first bite, they all tucked in; and he had to hand it to her, Delle knew her way around a plate of pasta. He ate with gusto, feeding his hunger rather than desire as he so wished; until he heard Arat arguing with someone outside.

"Oh what now?" He sighed, hoisting himself from his seat; Carl had barely eaten, but Delle blinked up at him with a few loose strands between her lips. 'How's she still that cute?' "Please excuse me; gonna go see who the fuck is disturbing us at dinner," as Delle slurped up the noodles he couldn't help a twitch in his pants. "Keep an eye on things sweetheart."

She glanced to Carl, his face still screwed up in figuring her out, Olivia still openly terrified. She mopped her mouth with a napkin, standing up straight. "Well... anyone for hide and seek?"

Chapter End Notes

...so last chapter didn't go over great. Was just curious if something's taken a turn?

As always please leave me a comment, I adore those kudos and bookmarks but the comments is how I know what's working and what's not!

Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU!♡♡♡♡
Chapter 79

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Before...

Delle's back was arching off Negan's desk, creating a perfect curve with her spine as he pounded into her with reckless abandon.

There were certain bitter benefits to having exorbitant free time.

"Yes! Fuck there, there!" She hissed, trying to keep quiet; but sex with Negan always made her scream. He grinned down at her, perspiration pebbling across his forehead as he angled his hips once more, thrusting in to hit the spots that felt like heaven.

"Right there? You like that, baby girl?" He panted, fingers dug into the flesh of her ass, pulling her down as he pushed in. Hot, tight and somehow wetter every time; he watched those pert, rosy tits bounce against her pushed up shirt, her tongue dart out past her lips as she struggled against breathy moans and gasps of his name. "Fuck-- you feel good; love the way your pussy chokes my cock."

She groaned in response; it was true she was tightening up with every thrust, almost bruisingly gripped around his length. She couldn't seem to help it; ever since their reunion at the motel she craved him like a drug. Every touch set her on fire, the sex had never been hotter, and even when she dripped with a fresh load of his cum she only ached for more. She chose not to question why, though; if her healing meant rough, possessive fucking every day or so, who was she to complain?

He felt her body spasm and walls flutter as he brought his thumb to her clit, harsh, rapid circles forcing her hands up and through her hair like she was losing her mind. It earned a chuckle out of him, watching her bite her lip to keep the decibels down. "Can't get too loud now, babygirl; whole school would know who's givin' it to you so good down here." His office, though fairly secluded, wasn't sound proof; and of late Delle would scream like a demon when he finally claimed her orgasm, her voice crying out for him with every ounce of her fire. He loved that howling, but with the school day only just ended, he wasn't in any mood to get found out.

He wasn't helping her case, though, with how hard and mercilessly he screwed her.

"F-fuck, Negan, I'm--" she could hardly form the words, her hands reaching up to pull him closer; he obliged, letting his front meet hers, white cotton on blushing flesh, mouth on mouth.

"I know sweetheart, I can feel it," he strained to hold it together; the moment before she'd come always drove him wild. Her sex would suck him in so deep, desperate to hold onto that delicious, stuffed feeling, her whole body would begin to tremble; the way her climax would hit her would remind him, in the most carnal ways, that he was responsible for her unraveling. And fuck, if that wasn't the hottest thing he'd ever seen. "Come for me, come on my cock-- let go, Delle."

That gruff voice in her ear, hands on her hip and shoulder, his heated scent of sweat and musk and Negan and that A plus pounding he was giving her; all of it spelled her doom. Her release washed over her in waves, each one crashing so hard and vicious that she had to take up a mouthful of his
tshirt - but not his skin - to keep from shrieking. Still, the sounds of her groaning combined with the
perfect storm of her orgasm meant he was at his edge; and he fell so willingly, growling like a
hungry beast as he pumped her full of his essence, that white heat emanating through her core and out
to her fingertips and the curl of her toes. He'd stole everything she'd had to offer, and given back just
as much in return; as lovers, they were perfect equals.

He was in no hurry to move, his thick manhood still twitching as it softened, slipping free from her
channel in the sweet combination of their pleasures. He finally pulled himself up at the pressing of
her hands to his ribs, a kiss finding her brow. "Hot damn, Delle; that was fan-fucking-tastic."

"Agreed," her voice sounded strained as she wriggled beneath him. "But you're fucking heavy-- get
off me!"

He blinked and laughed, drawing up to stand and readjust his jeans to the proper spot on his hips; it
hadn't taken much to get them going that day. She'd walked in under the pretense of discussing
Fang's grades, but as soon as she spread her skirted legs across his desk, revealing a certain lack of
undergarment, he was done for. "Heh, sometimes I forget how tiny you really are."

She huffed and propped herself up, waiting for the feeling to return to her bare legs. "I could be as
tall as you and you'd still sink me like a stone, you fucking geezer," he squeezed her knee and leaned
back in his chair, eyes beelining for the apex of her thighs. "Enjoying the view?"

"Like a goddamn work of art," pink, puffy and used, her pussy seeped with white dribbles of his
come; a total look of ownership that always made him twitch, even right after release. "The Mona
Lisa ain't got shit on that."

"Arent' you romantic," she closed her legs, much to his dismay, finding the strength to stand again;
she tugged at the hem of her skirt, a new one, a little longer than her usual. It made her feel a little
more secure, and in her first week back under Barnes, she needed that confidence. She counted
herself confused and lucky to find a bonus added on to her final paycheck from Salder's - that bonus
being almost double the check itself. She had no idea what brought it on - maybe the guilt had finally
caught up with Jordy - but she wasn't about to look a gift horse in the mouth. The money was
needed, and accepted. "First Friday back at Barnes' tonight; hoping it doesn't get too rowdy."

"I'm sure you'll be fine," he said reassuringly, calmly; though he folded his arms to hide the fading
purple bruises on his knuckles all the same. He'd neglected to tell her what he had done to Jordy;
knowing very well she'd ordered her own flesh and blood not to do anything, him beating the bastard
into the ground wasn't about to win him any prizes in chivalry. Delle handled herself; and on some
level he knew that pulverizing had been for him, too. He needed to feel useful in a useless situation -
maybe it was selfish, but the blood on Jordy's face had cleared that right up. "And if you need to,
you can always call in some muscle." He winked and curved his arm up, flexing his bicep.

He loved the way she laughed at him. "Ha, right, because I want you to throw your back out tryin'
to throw a punch," 'Oh if you only knew, beautiful.' Negan mulled and watched her sort her clothing,
breasts disappearing behind black fabric again. "I've got that bat behind the bar if I need it; but I hope
I won't." Delle, so used to fighting, so ready for it at all times, was happy to have a ceasefire with the
world at large. The faint bruises in her skin had garnered her a little sympathy, even with her sharp
tongue.

"You won't; it'll be alright."He stood, his ardor up in a hurry; the thought of beating Jordy senseless
for his lover had kicked up that hunger in him. His fingers toyed with her nipples through her top and
he feathered her neck with soft kisses; he was growing hard again, his bulge insistent on her
"Again? Really old man?" She teased; she loved to poke at his age, and she was up for another round. He responded by bending her at the waist, body flush against the desk.

"What can I say, I'm spry for my age." He licked his fingers and slid them between her eager folds; though he knew very well she was still soaked. He released his cock from the confines of his denim guiding it against her; anything to soothe her nerves.

"So you keep telling me. But really we don't have ti-ahh!" He cut her off as he stuffed her full; she was still tender, but her pussy had already conformed to his shape once that day. He growled low as his chest pressed to her, breath hot on her ear as he started to thrust.

"Don't go tellin' me what I can or can't do, doll," he punctuated his last word with a snap of his hips, drawing out a shiver. "If I want to bend you over my desk and fuck you all day long, that's just what I'll do."

"You're incorrigible, teach," she groaned out as he picked up his pace, long fingers pulling her hips back onto him as he pushed forward. "Mm! But you make a compelling point."

"You're fuckin' right I do, babygirl," he placed open kisses across her shoulders, sinking his teeth in when he reached her neck. He knew he had a talent in fucking the pain away; and he wanted her to feel weightless when she left his office. "Goddamn you're so fucking tight."

"Comes with youth," she whimpered as he bucked forward a little harder at that, bringing one large paw down in her ass in a slap; she instantly felt herself constrict around his dick. "Oh fuck that's it!"

"Yeah babygirl that's it, take it," his hand swung down onto her backside over and over, relishing the vice like clamp it was causing on his sex. She was stifling herself but he could see the blood rushing to her cheek, her eyes growing glassy. "You gonna fuckin' come for me, babygirl?"

"Y-yes..."

"Do it; soak my goddamn cock, sweetheart." His heaving growl in her ear was all it took to push her past the edge, her climax hitting her so sharply, her body trembling under the powerful waves he so often supplied. It took only a few more thrusts into her slickness before he was spent once more, the double dose of his come giving her a full, warm feeling in her core. She thanked her past self for packing panties in her bag; she didn't like the thought of come drizzling down her leg and freezing in the cold.

"I swear you fuck like a bunny." She hummed through a chuckle, his lips pressing to the back of her neck in haphazard kisses. He was insatiable; but at that point in her life, she loved it. Craved it. Needed it.

"Yeah, but I'm hung like a horse," he grinned and pulled away, his sex guaranteed to be done - at least for the hour. "Text me when you're done?"

It'd become habit that she text him at the end of her shift, as well as when she arrived home; it offered them both massive peace of mind. "Sure thing, teach," it took a few moments for to gather her winter wear, slip on the spare panties and get her things together. Before leaving she grabbed his face in both hands, a truly happy kiss meeting his mouth. "I love you."
Whenever she'd say it first he'd feel a sudden bliss take over; like floating in gold. "I love you too, Delle."

The night had been going so well.

Barnes had been so kind to her in her absence; in truth he somewhat blamed himself for letting her close by herself that evening, and was more than willing to give her more time if she needed it. It'd taken even more convincing to let her work a shift by herself, give the poor old man a night of rest. It was sweet, but the inactivity was beginning to drive her stir crazy - she needed human contact, something useful to do. Even if was just slinging drinks.

And lucky her, her friend Lucille was back in town.

As it turned out, Lucille travelled as a pharmaceutical representative; it was demanding work, and it meant she would leave their sleepy little town for weeks at a time. Delle couldn't help a little jealousy over that; such a job took her all over the country. She had to wonder what kept her coming back to this podunk one horse town.

"Grew up here," Lucille explained, dipping her Mule. "It's what I'm used to; no matter where I go I always feel at home when I come back."

Delle smiled in return. "That's a good way to be," she declared, polishing up a set of glasses that needed her dire attention. "I'm here mostly for family; not about to uproot my brother for no reason, and dad isn't gonna help any." Coming to think of him she hadn't seen him in weeks; she'd seen Lucille more often. Despite their familiarity now, she didn't dare bring up the loss she'd experienced weeks ago; if she wanted to talk about it, she'd talk.

"You're an angel, aren't you?" Lucille had a very low liquor tolerance, two drinks in and giggling. "Most siblings I know are at each other's throats or don't speak to each other."

"Can't really imagine that," 'Yes you can, you slut,' her angels pointed out as she dug out a broom; she felt casual enough with Lucille to get to tidying, and the bar needed it. 'You were on radio silence till the incident.' "Me and him are all we really have in the world. Doesn't make sense to fight." 'Well, you have something else in the world.' That smile, those eyes, that body - his love.

"Now that's smart," Lucille spun on her stool, keeping up with their conversation. "Y'know you never mentioned his name?"

"Really?" Delle pulled a face, pausing with the broom for a moment. That didn't seem like her; Fang was her pride and joy. "His name's Eric, but people call him Fang now."

The name clicked; she knew she'd heard her husband mention such a student recently, a star player with a winning personality and a tough-guy nickname. "Fang? Oh! I think my--"

"DELLE FUCKING CORNISH!" A familiar, furious voice had ice water washing down Delle's spine before she even saw its owner. David - David 'almost-bit-his-dick-off' David - had burst through the entrance, fuming and furious.

"W-what the hell are you doing here?" Her hands immediately tightened around the broom's stalk;
steeling herself she stood her ground, stepping between the man and Lucille.

"Just saw Jordy!" He bellowed, slurring; he'd been imbibing somewhere. "What the fuck did you do to him!?"

She blinked, completely confused. "What the fuck are you talking about? I haven't seen him since he fucking fired me."

"Lying cunt!" He accused, setting the spark in her alight. "He's all fucked up, swollen up like a goddamn tomato! You jumped him or some shit!"

"Jumped him how!? I'm barely healed!" Her bones were almost done mending, but she wasn't in any state to beat anyone up. Defend herself, maybe. "He probably pissed off the wrong fucking person!"

Lucille watched the heated argument, scared out of her wits. She'd noticed Delle's absence, but had never imagined the reason being so dark.

"Fuck you! I know you fucking did something, got somebody t' help you--" her first thought jumped to Fang; no, he wouldn't. But Negan might've. "--you're gonna pay for that you little slut!"

He stormed forward, sloppily enough that Delle could grasp the broom at the bristles, winding up for a swing and cracking him hard across the face. He reeled back as his blood spattered the bar room floor, cursing; he was distracted enough not to notice the broom come down again, hitting the back of his head and shoulders.

"You get the fuck out of this fucking bar, asshole!" She warned, holding the wooden stalk, ready to strike again. "If I catch you here again I will fucking bury you!"

"Y-you fucking psycho!" He growled, blood gushing from his nose; it was definitely broken.

"Get the hell out, David," she snarled, drawing back and smashing the end of the broom into his stomach; there went his wind. "Get out before I rip that franken-dick from your crotch, nuts and all."

He hadn't planned the confrontation well; tiny though she was, Delle was a force to be reckoned with, and he was nothing without back up. He cussed a handful more times before crawling off with his tail between his legs. It left Delle panting, the red that clouded her vision vanishing, terror and trauma setting back in.

"D-Delle?" She flinched as she felt Lucille's hand on her shoulder. She looked up at the older woman, the concern on her face genuine. "Are you okay? Who was that?"

Delle swallowed down her dry throat. "Noone good," her pulse was racing, desperate for answers. "L-Lucille I'm sorry, but I'm gonna close up for tonight. Sorry to kick you out."

Lucille understood the need for space; her husband always seemed to sense her own need for it before she even had to say it. "Okay Delle," she said softly. "I...I hope everything is alright."

Delle smiled grimly, hardly holding it together as Lucille settled up, leaving far too large of a tip, and heading home. As soon as the door shut, Delle locked it and screamed bloody murder into her hands. She raced to the bar, retrieving her phone; she knew Fang was at a friend's that night, and dialed the needed number.
"Delle?" Fang sounded bewildered when he got on the line. "Are you okay? Should I come home? Wh--"

"Did you tell Negan about Jordy?" She growled bluntly. "Answer me!"

"Negan!?" He was startled awake from his half slumber on his couch, cell phone and local newspaper laying across his chest; it took him a moment to realize it was his wife calling for him.

"In the den," he replied, sleep making his voice hoarse. She came in, clearly shaken, warm brown eyes wide with shock. "Y'alright, honey?"

"Y-yes," she spoke softly, leaning against the armrest of their couch. "You won't believe what I just saw."

He was waking up slowly, worry setting in with alertness. "What happened?"

She cleared her throat, pressing a hand to her chest to center herself. "Well, I was down at Barnes' pub..."

And his heart sank down to hell.

'Oh no."

'You've done it now."

Chapter End Notes

You guys are the best ♡♡♡♡ thank you all for reminding me I have the best readers of all time :)

Fun fact about this chapter, 'round 2' was the original one shot I wrote that inspired this whole story. Wanted to use it eventually; how far we've come, huh?

As always, write me! Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU! ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 80

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Spencer was the type of man that set Delle's teeth on edge. He wasn't crude, like Negan, or snarky, like Carl - he played politically, charming smiles and agreeable nods and praises. He reminded her of the Hilltop leader, Gregory - years younger, but just as much of an ass kisser. She was surprised Negan even gave him the time of day; but as she eyed the well aged scotch in the young man's grip, she accepted she probably would've caved too.

"Grab us a couple fresh glasses, would ya sweetheart?" Negan let himself lean against the messy kitchen island, sizing up the new visitor; he looked somewhere in Delle's age bracket, and it didn't go unnoticed when the man peeked past his shoulder to steal a look at her. Turning his head he saw her on her toes, ass looking particularly perky with her body straining for a pair of tumblers on a high shelf. Delle Cornish was many things, but tall wasn't one of them. He looked back to Spencer, eyes narrowed and possessive. "See somethin' you like, Spencer?"

The young man clearly knew his way around talking himself out of awkward situations. "Just wondering if she could use a hand; wouldn't want her gettin' cut on broken glass." The idea of her hands stuck with glass shards brought him back to the night she'd learned about Lucille; it threw him off, much to his chagrin.

"More than capable on my own," Delle grunted as a little jump finally allowed her to grab the glasses. She supplied them to the two men quickly, before addressing her leader. "I'll keep an eye on Carl."

"Heh," Negan chuckled and extended a hand out for Spencer to start pouring. "You just want to play with that baby."

'It's a cute baby! Fuck you old man you're probably shooting blanks anyway suck my dick--!' "Sorry, did you want to leave the little future serial killer alone?" She didn't wait for a response, marching into the living room where she knew the little family had squirreled off to.

"So Carl, you kids got Monopoly or anything?" She strolled in like a welcome house guest, he and Olivia were still visibly anxious around her; but Judith waddled over on her little legs with arms outstretched. She grinned and pulled her up in a supportive hug. "Looks like Pops is gonna be entertaining your pal for a little while."

"He's not really a friend." Carl blurted out as Olivia tossed him a look. 'Guess things aren't so peachy in Alexandria."

"Well either way," she shrugged and dropped into a cross legged seat, bouncing the child on her knee. "You get to keep me company til he's done suffering fools. Lucky you!" She tickled Judith and earned a shriek of mirth.

Carl watched nervously, but his curiosity got to his mouth before he could think twice. "N-Negan isn't really your father, is he?"

Her brows dip and she squawked a laugh. "No, Negan isn't really my dad," she assured him - she
would've thought their short lived heavy petting in the kitchen would've told him that. "Negan's a better man than my dad ever was."

"How's that even possible?" 'Ah, teenagers - all mouth, no filter.'

"You're young, kid," she spoke thoughtfully, gently puppeting his little sister's arms. "There's alot worse things a person can be than the living dead."

"I know," something in his response told her he spoke from experience. 'Negan is his experience.'

"How'd you wind up with him?"

'Ou boy that is one big ass question!' She smirked, a little wistfully, as she thought back to her early days with him, over mahogany, whiskey and laughter; but Carl wasn't hearing about any of that. "I don't know. Sanctuary has pretty decent food, that helped."

Carl didn't take up with her humor. "They're monsters; including him--"

"Easy, kid," she warned, eyes hardening at him. "Remember who you're talking about. And who you're talking to."

His mouth pursed but she only raised further question. "You don't... I mean, you're..."

"Odd?" She substituted. "Don't really fit? Yeah, I get that alot. 'I was never made to fit in anywhere.'"

"You were... nice to me," he continued, talking like he was problem solving. "You stuck up for Enid with that creepy Savior. You seem like a good person," she huffed, raising her brows. "Why stay?"

She let Judith off her lap, watching her amble over to Olivia before she stood. "You're makin' alot of assumptions, Carl," she stretched out her arms above her head, her legs. "Just because I have a moral compass that doesn't point dick south doesn't mean I'm a good person. Far from it. Am I gonna speak up when somebody's bein' an asshole?Fuck yeah," she got up in Carl's face, an inch or so below him. "But don't think that doesn't mean I won't cut down anybody who stands against us. I'm Delle," she grinned, seeing the fear trickle back into Carl's one eye. "But I'm still Negan."

The answer clearly didn't satisfy the boy; whatever he'd had to do in this reality apparently didn't stack up to the evils of Negan and the Sanctuary. "Would your brother feel the same way?"

She had him pinned against the wall in a flash, forearm crushing down on his throat; shock overtook any anger in his face, Olivia yelping and dashing up the stairs with Judith. Delle's gaze was hard, teeth clenched tight. "I was bein' nice," she growled. "Tryin' to give you the goddamn benefit of the doubt, keep you from bawlin' your damn eye out over your mama - good to know you're happy to twist my own memories on me at the drop of a hat." 'Negan was right about these fucks.'

"I-I didn't mean it like that," he rasped, barely able to choke down air. "P-please..."

'Damn my saintly heart.' She admonished herself and pulled away, the boy gasping for air. There was a thick, tense silence before he found his words again.

"Your brother... would he be okay with who you are today? Could you look him in the eye?" His breathing returned to normal as he watched her back, waiting.
It was a regular consideration for her; even back then, Negan had been a sore topic. Fang had worshiped him, up until that winter dance; and that wasn't even taking into account the June fiasco. Would he be okay with it? Would he say the same he always did? His faded voice played in her head: 'I'm glad you're happy.' "You'd be surprised, kid."

Their conversation was interrupted by the stomp of boots from the porch, Negan's laughter loud and raucous. 'Don't tell me he's leaving me alone here!?' She wasn't all too worried about defending herself, but she didn't much care for the heart to heart she had gotten sucked into. Both she and Carl made for the door, seeing the peculiar sight of Spencer, with Arat's help, rolling a pool table out of a garage across the street, Negan supervising and zipped back in his jacket. 'What in the everloving fuck?'

Spencer still had Negan's ear, and would hold onto it for dear life as long as he could. He had his own agenda, as most politicians do; convince stronger men to do their dirty work. And his dirty work was Rick.

"Y'know I could never do this with Rick!" Negan exclaimed, loud enough to hear from Delle's spot rooted on the veranda. "He'd just be standing there, scowling, giving me that annoying side-eye he gives me."

An in! Something for Spencer to squirm through, hopefully crawling into Negan's good graces. "That's actually what I came to see you about," he said softly, wracking up billiards as Negan resined his cue. "I want to talk to you about Rick."

Negan grinned; he had no plans to be swayed by this greased up little coward, but watching him step willingly into hungry jaws was just too much fun. A crowd of Alexandrians were gathering to watch them, and oh he loved an audience; but with them had come a second wave of Saviors, arrived for the scheduled offering. That day would prove fruitful, either way. "Alright," he purred, lining up for his first shot, cue ball glinting in the setting sun. "Talk to me, Spencer. Talk to me about Rick."

As it turned out, Spencer had alot of opinions to share as they knocked around a game of 8ball. "I get what you're trying to do here, what you're trying to build," he stood like a sentinel, grasping his pool cue as Negan sank a couple of shots. "I'm not saying I agree with your methods, but I get it. You're building a network. You're making people contribute for the greater good. It makes sense," he swallowed down whatever nervousness he had; he was fairly confident he could sway him. "But you should know Rick Grimes has a history of not working well with others."

'Grimes? Seriously? ' Negan was more concerned with acing his shots; a tricky corner pocket kept him from three in a row. "Is that so?" He was getting bored.

"Rick wasn't the original leader here. My mom was. She was doing a really good job of it. Then she died, not long after Rick showed up -- same with my brother, same with my dad." It was obviously a touchy spot as Spencer pocketed a few shots himself.

"So, everything was peachy here for -- what -- years? And then Rick shows up, and suddenly, you're an orphan? That is the saddest story I've ever heard," His tolerance was nearly up. "Lucky for you Rick's not in charge anymore."

"Doesn't matter," 'did this kid just tell me what I said doesn't matter? ' "His ego's out of control. He'll find a way to screw things up, to try and do things his way, to take over. That's what he did with my mom; and he will do it again."
"What exactly are you proposing be done about that?" 'Let's end this quick.'

"I am my mother's son," Spencer straightened tall, needlessly proud. "I can be the leader this place needs. That you need."

'Funny, pretty sure I'm already the leader this place needs.' "So I should put you in charge -- that's what you're saying?"

"We'd all be much better off."

'Good god, and I thought I had a god complex,' Negan had heard enough; he was done listening to this snotty douchebag go on about his lack of accomplishments like he deserved a reward for tragedy. 'I know far more tragic souls,' He looked to the porch, Delle shifting from side to side slow; her attentions were on the mass of viewers behind him, studying each one in case someone was feeling brave. 'That's my girl.'

"You know, I'm thinking, Spencer," he began the last speech the young man would ever hear. "I'm thinking how Rick threatened to kill me, how he clearly hates my guts. But he is out there right now, gathering shit for me to make sure I don't hurt any of the fine people that live here," he emphasized that with a wave of his arm, then lining up a new shot. "He is swallowing his hate and getting shit done. That takes guts. And then there's you--" he tossed a haphazard hand to Spencer, setting down his cue. 'How're you gonna do it, Negan?' Delle asked herself, trying to guess. "The guy who waited for Rick to be gone so he could sneak over and talk to me to get me to do his dirty work, so he could take Rick's place," he was nearly next to him now, stalking him like a wolf about to shred his neck. 'Maybe not the neck.' " So I got to ask -- if you wanna take over, why not just kill Rick yourself and just - take - over?"

Spencer, nonplussed and shocked to be out thought stammered; he suddenly realized he was in the mouth of the beast, and there was no getting out alive. "W-what? No-- n-no- I didn't, I-I don't-"

"Know what I'm thinkin'? Because I have a guess," 'Lucille's too far away,' Delle calculated in her head. 'Doubt he'd waste a fistfight on this guy...all that's left is--' "its 'cause you got no guts."

That last word proved her theory; the mean bowie knife at Negan's hip, unsheathed by his hand, buried into Spencers stomach with a hard thrust. A quick tug and the man was eviscerated, intestines and bowels springing forth, never to be set right again.

Delle stared at Negan, blood soaked and arrogant, smirking at the collapse of this weasel, moaning and groaning like a stuck pig. "Ohh. How embarrassing. There they are. They were inside you the whole time! You did have guts. I've never been so wrong in my whole life!"

Blood pooled at Negan's boots as Spencer died slowly; disembowelment is a lengthy death in most cases, and much like in life, Spencer was no exception. Negan had done well to prove his point; Rick was the leader he wanted in charge, and any talk of uprising would be quashed quickly. That was now obvious - but Negan did love to showboat.

"Now," he purred, wiping his bloodied knife across his pant leg, restoring the weapon to its sheath. "Someone ought to get up here and clean this mess up," he took up Lucille, wanting to project that nightmarish image of himself. 'You proved your point, Negan - don't overdo it.' Delle warned within; but overdoing it was his specialty. "Oh," he threw a mocking pout into the miserable, terrified crowd, Lucille cradled against his shoulder. "Anyone want to finish the game? C'mon. Anybody? Anybody? C'mon. I was winning!"
Then some idiot pulled a gun. There was a shot. And for ten of the longest seconds of her life, Delle blacked out.

She couldn't breathe, couldn't hear, couldn't see; could barely feel herself still standing. The shot was perfect; a dark haired Alexandrian not ten feet from him had fired, the sound of the bullet seeking him out sending unspeakable terror striking through her entire being. 'No,' her mind managed to beg, plead to noone but herself. 'Please, no; don't take him from me!' Her silent screams were swallowed by the darkness that seemed to engulf her being; in a gunshot the world had fallen away. Cold. Dark. Nothing.

Then she heard him speak; he was angry, but he didn't sound hurt. Her vision returned, slowly, his body still tall, proud and furious. The bullet had hit the bat. He was fine.

Incredibly fucking livid, but fine.

And the air flooded back into her lungs, soul reentering her body as Arat incapacitated the shooter, Negan outraged at the top of his lungs. Feeling returned, nails scratching curves into the porch railing.

"Have it your way!" Negan's voice boomed, somehow louder than she'd ever heard it. "Arat! Kill somebody!" Delle's freshly heightened senses could feel the whizz of the bullet flying past her, the thud of Olivia's body hitting the deck felt like an earthquake. Carl made some tragic noise in his throat, but Delle's eyes never left Negan. 'He's alive.'

And lo and behold, the man of the hour finally staggered up; Rick, confused, shocked and undoubtedly upset. However whatever he was feeling couldn't possibly stack up to Negan; he was ready to burn down the community, resources and all. 'Dial it back, man!'

"Rick!" He might've been smiling but he was rage incarnate. It'd been such a good day. "Look, everybody, it's Rick. Ah, your people are making me lose my voice doin' all this yelling!" He enclosed on his space, as he loved to do. "Rick ...how about a "thank you"? I mean, look, I know we started this relationship with me beating the holy shit out of your friends, and because of that, we're never gonna sit around and braid each other's hair or share our deepest, darkest secrets, but how about a little credit? We just bent over backwards to show you how reasonable we are!" It was taking every ounce of his willpower not to put the man down right then and there. "Your kid -- he hid in one of my trucks and machine-gunned a bunch of my men down! I was ready to send him to the cells, but my girl up there --" she felt a sudden shock as he pointed directly at her, those scared blue eyes following his direction. "--she convinced me to bring him home, and she made him a fucking goddamn spaghetti dinner!"

Rick was dumbstruck and petrified, but he had to be strong; save as many lives as he could here. Negan was still reeling off his accomplishments, including disemboweling Spencer - Rick just wanted him gone.

"P-please your stuff's at the gate," he rasped, bargaining for his people. "Just go..."

Negan wasn't in the mood for his attitude; but he could understand it. As much as he would've liked to call him on it, the homemade bullet now lodged in his bat was far more intriguing. "Sure thing, Rick," he sneered, the metal projectile in his fingertips. "Right after I find the guy or gal who made this bullet..." Noone initially volunteered; why would they? But he couldn't have them clamming up. "Arat!" She readied to shoot again, prompting a few voices.
"It was me!" Shouted a young girl, Delle's age - she looked scared, but brave.

"It wasn't..." Delle recognized the twang in that voice; her eyes finally lifted from Negan and to the speaker. Eugene. He'd been driving the RV that night. "It was me...only me."

And with that, the Sanctuary had gained a new pet.

"Not gonna lie t' you Rick, your kitchen is a goddamn mess," Negan mocked, spinning his wrist to direct his people out. "Til next time!" He paused, looking to Delle; only then seeing the look in her eyes. The fiery nature of her eyes had turned cold; still burning, yes, but somehow frozen. 'Uh oh.' "Delle! Let's go!" He didn't like the longer-than-a-few-seconds it took for her to move; dashing inside to retrieve her jacket and Fang, joining him on the road. He hated it more that she pulled away from him when he tried to wrap an arm around her shoulders.

He utterly despised it when Gary hopped into the passenger seat instead of her.

"Where's Delle?" He grunted. He tried to seem nonchalant, but he was acting like a toddler who'd had his favorite toy confiscated.

"In back," his lieutenant explained. "Said she wanted to keep an eye on the prisoner. Met him in the RV."

'So what some mullet headed asshole bullet maker hops in and suddenly I'm not good enough company?' A storm brewed in his chest as he nodded, getting the truck going and beginning the journey home.

He nearly threw a fit when they arrived at Sanctuary and she practically ran from him to her room.

She couldn't be around him; her body still felt in shock, finally giving in to hyper breaths when she reached her quarters, collapsing to the concrete floor.

She'd had no clue, not even an inkling.

That day, Delle Cornish had come face to face with her worst fear. One she barely knew she had.

She couldn't lose him. Not again.

And that's why in the dead of night, Delle found herself outside Negan's room. She took a breath, knowing what she had to lose, everything she had to gain; and tried the knob.

It was unlocked.

Chapter End Notes

Are your stockings hung, readers? Milk and cookies out?

Cuz it's Christmas eve.
Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 81

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

He was fast asleep; expected, after such a trying day. Eugene was a mess; smart as a whip, but a mess. Negan wasn't yet certain he'd truly be useful, but he'd give him a shot; he was quick to turn coat, which could prove him an asset. Or just a snake. He'd sent his wives down to entertain him for the evening; half to sweeten the deal, half because he couldn't stand to see them. They only reminded him of her storming away.

What the fuck did I do this time?' He'd pondered into a glass of whiskey before bed. It seemed that at every day he was wearing down her walls, drawing her closer; only for something to come along and spoil all his work. He was impatient at the best of times, and the wait was becoming hideously agitating. The memory of her taste and skin with the action of his hand could only substitute for so long. His sour mood didn't leave him as he finished his drink and stripped down for bed, expecting that exhaustion would allow him sleep, but thoughts of Delle would not allow him rest.

Yes, Negan was used to expecting certain things of the life he led.

But Delle had a way with the unexpected.

Which is how she wound up silently opening his bedroom door - 'did he forget to lock this?' - in the middle of the night. She was certain to latch it behind her before casting her gaze across the room, to his bed, to him.

He was unconscious to the world, dark bedding snuggling around his inked and battle tested flesh. As per usual, his face hadn't lost that serious look, with furrowed brows and slightly pursed lips. His chest rose and fell in sleepy breaths, all while Delle watched, heart pounding in her ears. It wasn't the first time she'd seen him laid up in that bed, fast asleep and vulnerable - but she had no plans of allowing that sleep to continue.

Somewhere along the march to his chambers, before she'd even really known where her feet were guiding her, did she find herself surrendering; her angels sounded alarms in her head as her walls came down, spouting off every reason why she should've turned around and retreated.

'He's hurt you in the past, he'll hurt you again!'

'Remember how bad it was!? How hard!?'

'Why would you do this to yourself!?'

'Why betray Simon like this!?'

'What about the wives!?'

'You can't let him win!'

All of it paled against the constant thrumming of her heart and the one reason she had to continue on. 'I need him.'
It was time to fall back into hell, and she was jumping in willingly; if she was being honest, an ache had set in the second she'd left her room, and now, barely five feet away, it had turned into a throb.

'Am I really doing this?' She had to ask herself one more time; truly be sure. She could still slip away without him noticing, he'd never know she was there.

One more breath. 'Fucking right I'm doing this,' she decided. 'I want what I want.' She was slow in her movements and completely void of sound; carefully she removed her boots, placing them gingerly on the floor. Then came the socks. 'No way this is happening while wearing socks.' The time came for the big stuff. Slowly, she wrapped her arms around her middle, grasping the hem of her top and pulling it over her head; again, careful not to leave it behind in a noisy heap. The dark denim slid from her legs quickly, pooling at her ankles as she stepped out of them, closer, til her knees brushed his mattress.

He hadn't stirred an inch, completely unaware of the nearly naked woman standing next to him. 'Not for long, though.' She was left in that black pair of underwear, cleaned since the first time he'd seen them at their initial reunion; the bra hadn't felt necessary, and in all honesty it likely wouldn't have survived the night. She was prepared for aggressive reclaiming, rough and possessive and marking; not that she minded. She allowed herself to crave it, finally. She'd take any part of him he was willing to give.

He was dreaming; but it wasn't good. His office had materialized around him, the one in that high school from forever ago, and again he was begging her not to go. He could see those bright eyes bloodshot and wet, turning away from him, running away as he called for her, anything to make her come back; as if he didn't know the reasons she had to leave him. He shifted in his sleep, so far unaware of the soft movement, his bed barely compressing as someone crawled in beside him; he was still wrapped up in watching her run, arms reaching out without an inch of movement, begging for her. 'Delle, Delle please, we can talk about this! Don't leave! Please! Delle!'

"Delle..." he mumbled into his pillow, unknowingly turning his head to hers.

"Negan." His eyes fluttered, then snapped wide. 'Holy hell,' Like he'd summoned her, she was there; eyes soft and looking at him like she used to, like she loved him. Her hair, long and unbound, draped across a spare pillow, and he could see the tops of her shoulders and chest, bare and clean, peeking from his blanket. 'Am I still dreaming?' He wondered for a split second before her slender hand came up to his cheek, the heat against his skin proving reality. 'She's really here. She's choosing me.'

She smiled at the dumbfounded look on his face, utterly slack-jawed and bewildered. "Is now a bad time?" She whispered, fingers tracing his shaven jaw; early stubble was already threatening the smooth surface.

He just barely shook his head, eyes wide, a little worried that if he blinked she'd be gone. "Never a bad time for you, sweetheart." He replied and turned himself onto his side, daring to slide his hand to the curve of her hip; the feel of bare skin split by the thin fabric of her panties caused a low growl to erupt from his chest. "What brings you here?"

She wriggled closer, just enough that they weren't touching by inches. "Couldn't sleep," that was true; but she hadn't come for a slumber party. "...needed you." She admitted, his face relaxing into his natural grin.

"You've got me, babygirl," a heat pooled at her core for her pet name, his second arm sliding beneath
her head, the pillow, a quick hug closing the gap between them. "I'm all yours."

Oh, the kiss that followed was the kind one dreams of; honest, plain love, held back from the surface for so long, finally meeting in the explosive touch of its intended's lips. Negan remembered that kiss, the first time she'd let herself love him; but this time blew it out of the water. This was her promise, the affirmation of what she'd run from for years; she was his. He was hers. Soft at first, the kiss turned fervent quickly, tongues starving for the taste of each other, eager for every moan or growl they could extract. She detected the distinct flavor of whiskey in his mouth and for a moment felt a little worry that she'd drove him to drink; though as he rolled over her with a grunt, his slim hips splitting her thighs, the worry vanished.

"Fuck," he cursed as he gasped for air; already her lips were growing puffy with his friction. He hadn't meant to, but he was famished for her; it'd been so long since she'd dared to truly give herself to him. The feel of her flesh against him, careful not to crush her, was driving him insane; Negan, bare for sleep, could feel the warmth of her center radiating over him, against his length, now hard as steel. "You taste better every time I kiss you."

That gruff rasp made her muscles tingle, her arms coiling around his body; his hardness against her had her moistening by the second, that their becoming nearly painful. "Negan..." she tried for authoritative, but only got a hungry whimper; her body wasn't letting her hide how much she needed him. And oh if he didn't just love that.

"You okay, beautiful?" He purred, letting his wide frame curve over her body; she was so gorgeous under his eyes, every blemish and scar a deliberate brush stroke to create the work of art that she was. Kisses lined her throat, down against her collar bone as his lips remembered what spots made her jump, where to lave his tongue to induce a moan. "You look a little flushed."

She could've guessed he'd be cocky about this; she would've felt a little cheated if he weren't. "Just curious to see how much you remember," she groaned and arched off his mattress to his mouth, his talented tongue playing at her nipples; they couldn't possibly get stiffer, pinker, and as his mouth closed in for suction she almost screamed. "G-good so far..."

"I remember you fuckin' perfectly, sweetheart," he murmured into the valley of her tits before switching sides, soft, wet licks exciting her other rosy little pearl. "Always have. Never forgot how you taste, how you smell, how you feel..." one hand massaged at her breasts, the other sliding down her rib, her hip, fingers catching in the black waistband of her panties. "Never forgot how you cut with your words, what a badass little warrior you were and are, how sexy you are when you fight... christ you're the strongest woman I've ever met," he pulled back to slide the final garment off her legs, surprisingly gentle despite his impatience. "My strong little firecracker."

Normally Delle wasn't really one for accolades; but something in that harsh timbre made her twitch and twist in ways she'd forgotten. "MmA... You've got a real way with words, Negan," she purred and spread herself wide; utter submission. She was following his rule, now. "But as much as you love to hear yourself talk... I really need you right now."

'Sweet Jesus it really is Christmas!' He grinned and leaned back over her, hands running across her skin in firm strokes, grasping at her sensitive spots before one came to settle between her legs, dipping past her lower lips to find wetness within. "Oh babygirl..." he praised, fingertips pinching and teasing her bundle of nerves, making her buck and writhe. 'Goddamn she's just as hard up as I am. "Somebody's all excited."

"Mmah... please," she didn't have the energy for ribbing, quipping back at him with her razored
tongue. All that fire was blazing south, calling out for one thing in particular. "Please, Negan, I-I..."

He understood; he'd hoped to take a little more time with her when she'd finally came around, but in truth he was as eager to fill her as she was to receive. "I know, darlin'," he crooned, taking up the position he'd imagined himself in ever since she'd shown up at Sanctuary. One hand grasped his length, his velvety head lined up with her entrance - it was really happening, finally. Confident in his placement both forearms came to rest by her head, eyes bright as day connected with his, dark as night. "I got you, sweetheart."

Her breath hitched and caught in her throat as he pressed home, every inch sinking in a little quicker until he'd stuffed himself in to the hilt; she could feel a shiver coming on, that indescribable fullness finding her again. He was thicker than she remembered. His muscles tensed throughout his body, her tight channel squeezing him in welcome, wet, hot and thrilling. He watched as her mouth opened when he twitched his hips, pink tongue so inviting, eyes glazed and greedy. For awhile they laid there, reveling in their reunion, remembering the minute details that time had tried to steal away.

'I forgot how her nose crinkles when she takes me in.'

'I forgot his eyebrows turn up.'

'I forgot how red her cheeks go.'

'I forgot how that muscle in his neck tenses.'

'I forgot I felt this whole.'

Then he moved; and she crumbled. "Unh fuck!!" She gasped into a moan, his body drawing back to thrust in again, his cock hitting every spot just as she needed it. He growled in response, grinning, his efforts beginning in earnest as he fucked into her, every little moan and whimper music. "Oh god..."

"Close, sweetheart," he chuckled, tangling his fingers in her mane, mouth meeting as their bodies did, the rolling of his hips met with hers in a practiced rhythm. "Mm fuck; you're so wet, all mine..."

Her nails dug into his shoulders, curved under his arms as her hips bucked to meet his, inviting him in, everything, all of him. His thrusts were languid but forceful, his strength imbuing him with much needed stamina; he was a little worried he'd come as soon as he was inside her. Thankful that wasn't the case he picked up pace, stealing away the image of her eyes electrifying every time he bottomed out, tongues meeting in famished kisses, like one could swallow the other whole. He had her in that delirious, blissful state, his body feeding her own as she gave the same to him; she knew brutal fucking was on its way, but she was happy for the thorough, generous sex he was leaning into for the moment.

It was akin to an out-of-body experience, her mind hazy with him, the press of his flesh, the friction of his scars rubbing against her reminding her of the years she'd lost with him, vowing silently she wouldn't miss any more. His breath was ragged against her ear, muttering his adoration in whispers, his mouth determined to imprint the taste of her flesh on his tongue. This was making love; and she was so glad to be able to return it in kind this time.

"I missed you, Negan," she admitted in a quiet, honest whimper; his shoulders flexed and he swelled at her words, stretching her in the best ways. "I missed you so much, so long..."
"I know, sweetheart; holy fuck did I miss you too," he gave a breathy laugh and pressed his forehead to hers, eyes crinkling in a lovestruck grin. "Fuck, you feel even better than I remember..."

"You old romantic, you," This was the Negan she'd fallen in love with; the wolf of a man who's howling matched hers, the one who'd chased her in spite of everything, the unlikely love of her life. Her body spasmed as he angled his hips, changing his stance and hitting her sweetest, most tender spot. "Ah, yes there!" She cried out, raking her nails down his back; he obliged with gusto, thrusting more focused and harder. 'I wonder how the new Negan fucks...' she'd have to investigate - but that wasn't her priority. What drew her attention was the clenching of her pussy around him, the tension inside her building, right on the edge of release. "Fuck, Negan I'm so close, mm...!"

"I know baby; come for me -- shit, I need to feel you," he growled into the crook of her neck, his movements growing erratic and animal the closer she got, fully committed to getting her there, getting her off, getting her hooked on him again. "Come for me Delle, fuck, let me see it!"

His eyes blazed a fire that burned with hers, mixing as their bodies did, and in the heat of his arms, the strength of his body and the pleasure of his sex, she finally came apart; his name practically roared from her throat, turning into unintelligible moaning as she rippled around his manhood, her body shuddering in delight as the waves only he could bring down washed over her, cinching that this would be the first, not the only time in his bed.

It was all too much - this unexpected reunion, the love in her eyes, the delicious, soaked vice grip of her pussy around him - he snarled her name, his ownership as he lost control, thick jets of his seed filling her to the brim, the evidence of all she did for him pumping into her body. 'Fuck, feels just like it used to... better even.'

They were a panting, sweaty mass for more than a few minutes; both well steeped in the high of their reunion, an afterglow that shone like the sun. He couldn't stop staring at her, or she at him, silly, subtle smiles playing at their lips. Suddenly the arguments, all the resistance and fighting they'd put up and put up with seemed ridiculous, as they often did in the moments they shared, when it was just the two of them, the world fallen away and they could simply be. Even with the threat of the morning coming on fast, the truths they had to face and own up to, in those seconds they could be as bare as they wanted, totally accepted. In love.

She spoke first, her nose ghosting against his in a nuzzle. "Merry Christmas, Negan."

His laugh rumbled in his throat, hands coming to cup her still pink cheeks and plant a kiss on her lips. "Merry Christmas Delle," he grinned, her fingers stroking his forearms, both of them needing to touch the other to confirm they were there. "Why tonight?" He queried.

Her expression grew solemn for a moment, eyes glancing away in memory. "I almost lost you today," she murmured, running her fingers through his sex muddled hair. "When that stupid Alexandrian tried to shoot you..."

"Sweetheart," his voice was sympathetic, cooing, kisses sprinkling over her face slowly; was he stiffening up again? "I'll take more than a bullet to take me away from you." Grasping her hips he flipped onto his back, never disconnecting from her with his growing erection. 'It's been too long. I feel like a teenager.'

She felt him swelling again and her loins stirred; she could do with another round. She rocked her hips in a lazy rhythm, smiling as his hands ran the the length of her thighs, choosing not the bring up her scars there. "Even so," she breathed. "I figured things out real quick when I heard the gun fire."
"Is that right?" He pushed himself upwards, legs steadying his torso, eye to eye with his girl, hands moving to cup and fondle her ass; still as soft and irresistible as ever. "Finally figured out you can't live without me?"

'You cocky asshole.' "Oh I can," she said confidently, wriggling her lower body; he was nearly at full mast, she could feel it. "I absolutely can. I survived just fine on my own," he pouted in the dull moonlight, making her grin. "But I don't want to anymore."

His heart soared with her, a thrust of his hips getting them both going again. "You're stuck with me now, Delle."

It would be a wild night for the both of them. Their reunion stretching until dawn crested through his windows, illuminating two well loved, exhausted bodies, still entangled and touching, fed and sated; yet somehow always craving more.

For that one, sweet morning, they had all they wanted; the world, for once, could wait.

Chapter End Notes

Phew... we did it folks :) thank you for being so patient. Hopefully you enjoyed Christmas ;)

Dont worry, this isn't the end, not even close. We've got tons of more shit to hit the fan before this is all over.

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Eventually, the world got fed up with waiting. Negan was in the midst of training Eugene, keeping
the Sanctuary running, getting everyone in line; and to top it off, Daryl had run off and escaped
during his excursion, killing Fat Joseph in the process. He had a mountain of things that needed his
personal attention; but all he wanted was to remain wound up in his sheets, his darling Delle on top
of him, tracing her fingers along his skin.

But time waits for no man; even the leader of the Sanctuary.

And there was much to talk about.

"Afraid this day has to get started, darlin'," he murmured, a little whine leaving her lips. They'd been
up the whole night, getting reacquainted. "Those dumb fucks downstairs need my guidance; whole
place is gonna go to shit without me."

She sighed, unhappy but understanding. "I know," she grumbled, pushing herself up on his chest;
she forgot how good his chest hair felt, thick and coarse. "We do need to set aside some time
though... talk things out."

"Must we," he wondered, studying the curve of her back as she sat up, running her fingers through
tangled hair. "Feels like our bodies said plenty last night."

She rolled her eyes and tossed a look over her shoulder. "Talk with our mouths, dumbass," she stood
with the purposes of retrieving her clothing. "And you uh... you should think about procuring some
condoms from Carson, if we're gonna keep at this rate and quantity..."

"Why would I do that?" He pondered out loud, sweeping himself up and wrapping his arms around
her waist. "You know I only fuck bare, babygirl; and it just feels so damn good fillin' you up."

'Can't argue with him there.' She'd forgotten how good the spread of his heat felt inside her; but she
no longer had the luxury of every day pills to keep nature at bay. "I know you're all 'I deserve a
legacy' now, but you're not puttin' a baby in me," she shook her head, tilting all the way back to meet
his eye over her. "Not in this fucked up mess of a world."

He sighed and couldn't help a pout; it wasn't even a notion he dared entertain in the past, but now,
after seeing her with Rick's daughter, her domestic talents, he was feeling downright familial. Fuck a
legacy - he wanted a family, with her or noone. Still, he couldn't exactly force her into carrying his
child - that would only set him back in his efforts, and that look in her eyes might never shine on him
again if he pulled that. No, he'd have to be patient, hope that eventually she'd let him get her pregnant
- that is, if he hadn't already.

"Fine," he huffed like an unhappy child; he would need to get used to things not being his way. He
ran his hands up her smooth middle, kissing her shoulder. "As incredibly, tremendously sexy you
would look all rounded out with my offspring, I guess you have a point."

"You're damn right," she swatted at his hands, tugging her top over her head. She glanced to her
underwear, the scrap of fabric hanging loosely at the edge of his bed. "I'm not getting those back, am I?"

He grinned proudly. "Not a fuckin' chance," she rolled her eyes and scoffed, tugging on her jeans as is; they'd need a considerable wash once she could change. He set to dressing in his usual best, leather and denim, Lucille waiting patiently on an arm chair. For a moment he felt a twinge of guilt, thinking of how the bat had a perfect view of their carnal activities all night. 'Nothin' she didn't already know...' "I got to deal with that mullet again today - god I hope he's actually useful."

"Worth a shot," she replied, pulling on her socks, boots. She thought back to the night she'd seen him, told him bravery would get him killed. She wondered if he'd taken it to heart. "Got some runnin' around to do today myself - might see if I can track down that fuckwad Daryl--"

"Oh no you don't," his voice deepened, tall over her. Daryl was malnourished and beaten, but he was still much bigger than Delle, and clearly cunning. He wasn't about to lose her, not a goddamn chance. "I've got teams out lookin' for him. He'll get found."

She acquiesced, but not without a chill down her spine; one of those teams was likely the Hilltop outpost, and that meant Simon. As good as last night was, she felt horrible over her bean pole - he'd been kind, kind of - and she'd undermined his one request. She had to plan things out right to keep her life in him finding out.

"Hey," Negan's fingers caught her chin, pulling her gaze to his. "We'll figure this out. It'll be okay," he leaned down and kissed her gently, trying to reassure with his lips. "Nothin's gettin' in our way this time."

She smiled; she'd forgot how much of a high it was to share his unflappable confidence. "God help anything or anyone that tries."

"That's my girl," his dominant hand dropped to squeeze her backside, give her a playful smack. "Come by tonight; I'll pick up a couple raincoats, rock your world a few more times."

"You do know how to romance a girl, don't you? 'Oh who am I kidding that's an ideal date with him!' She slipped into her boots, readying to slip down to her room again, hopefully inconspicuously. "Maybe I'll drop by; if I have the time."

"That's all I'm askin'," he chuckled, catching her by the wrist as she went to leave. When her head turned their lips met; firm, sweet and promising. "I love you, Delle."

Her stare faltered for a moment; she wasn't sure she was ready to say it, ready to feel it the way he did. "I..."

"You don't have to say it back right away," he smoothed her hair, kissing her cheek. "I know I'm workin' on you. I just wanted you to hear it and not get smacked for sayin' it."

She smirked, relieved but a little wary. "Since when are you so patient?"

"I waited this long," he shrugged. "I can wait a little longer."
She felt like she was in a cloudy stupor as she waltzed down to the lower levels of the compound; practically floating, close to literally dancing the corridors like some Disney Princess. It was so utterly the opposite of who she was; but she didn't mind. In the absurd juxtaposition of the living dead outside, her feeling like a lovesick ingenue was an amusing, welcome change; not that anyone within those walls would see her like that, that sour face plastered on as a barrier against wayward guesses to her evening's whereabouts. She assumed they'd have to hide the truth - they'd both got used to that over time with one another - and she could live with that, for the time being. Eventually he'd likely want to go public, but not before her say-so; which meant no big, physical changes that might give them away.

She was outside Carson's office in record time.

She sighed and twisted the knob, knowing what she was there for would raise questions; but she was confident she could convince the old doctor to keep his trap shut. He was seeing to stitches on a newer Savior, both startled by the young she-wolf's presence. "G'morning Doc."

"H-hello Delle," standard greeting for the overrun doctor; working the Sanctuary was no picnic, even with elevated status. "Can I help you with something?"

"In fact you can!" She crossed her arms, glaring at the uncomfortable Savior. "Put a bandaid on that and scram, kid," he blinked, almost confused for a minute. 'Fucking really?' "Get the fuck out!"

And away he went. Carson looked about ready to leave too, and she would've let him had she not needed him to get her the meds she needed.

"W-what can I get for you, Delle?" The poor old man was still uneasy around her, but she preferred it kept that way.

"Well Doc, I'm gonna need you to set me up with some emergency contraception," she shrugged and placed a flat palm on her stomach. "Got a little emergency to take care of."

Carson looked mortified for a moment; Delle wondered if Sherry had perhaps shared her suspicions with the good doctor with how he was staring at her. "Oh...oh of course, one moment." He turned to his cabinets, rummaging in deep for the long untouched morning after pills; the points system made them an inordinately expensive luxury, and so people rarely came to call for them.

When he finally pulled them free she couldn't help a laugh; now out of surprise and exasperation. Generally, after-the-fact contraceptives were stored individually, or in pairs; but here at Sanctuary, they were all piled in a glass jar like they were common as a jar of pickles. She had a legitimate concern in her chest, seeing the mismatched colors and shapes of the pills inside and hoping they weren't just placebos; but she had to try.

"Bit of a grab bag there, huh?" She remarked sarcastically. Carson swallowed nervously as he unscrewed the lid, fishing out a singular blue pill.

"Yes, well... when they found these they thought it'd be more efficient to keep them all lumped together," he sighed and handed the little disc to her. "Wish I could say I still had the packaging, but that didn't even make it back here."

"Men," she groaned, inspecting the medicine; this was her first encounter with emergency methods, so she was in unfamiliar territory. "Is just one dose going to be enough?"
"It should?" She didn't like how apprehensive he sounded in that. "Without the labels it's hard to tell the dosages... but if you double down in the wrong type it can cause hemorrhaging, and we're not in the best equipped state for that."

She pulled a face and stared at the pill in her hand. 'Gotta try at least.' "Alright," she popped the med in her mouth and swallowed it dry. "But if I've got a bun in the oven I'm holdin' you personally accountable."

He felt a little indignation - she's the one who'd decided to have sex without planning ahead - but he chose not to voice his thoughts. Safer that way. "Understood."

She nodded to the doctor before turning to leave, but not without a few more words. "Oh and Doc... if you breath a word of this to anyone, even the most insignificant prisoner... I will make you wish you were dead." Her eyes were so cold and serious he was already praying for death as she left.

Delle fetched herself an apple from the general commune, having an inkling that this medicine was supposed to be taken with food. It's crisp flesh went down easy, but she almost threw it up when she opened the door to her room.

Sherry was standing there.

"Hey Sherr-bear," Delle tried not to convey the fact that she was freaking out inside. "Can I do somethin' for ya? Girl talk? 'How does she keep getting stuck in my craw?'

"You lied..." she rasped; clearly she had done her crying for the day, now dried out and angry. "You're a lying whore."

'This fucking cunt!" "That's not a nice thing to say about someone, Sherry," she tsked, curious as to what she meant - though she had a guess. "Is our deal no longer worthwhile for you?"

Sherry stiffened, knowing that if Delle could get her out she wouldn't let herself get caught again; but from what she'd seen she couldn't bring herself an ounce of trust in the woman. "I saw you last night," Delle's blood ran cold. "You snuck into Negan's room... I didn't see you come back out."

'This nosy little bitch has crossed me one too many fucking times--' "Ah, that. Yes, I went to go see Negan, but nothin--"

"I heard you two," 'Well shit.' "You weren't forced up there, he didn't coerce you... you said... you said you missed him."

'Goddamn this girl's got ears like a bat,' With a huff she leaned against her own door, pinching the bridge of her nose. "Okay... fine. Yeah, we fucked. Big deal." 'Seemed like a pretty big deal last night!'

"You-- how could you even--!?" Everyone she talked to seemed to have a hell of a time rationalizing her attraction to Negan; but then, they didn't know him like she did. "W-what about missing him!? What was that about?"

"Just like...generally missing him, I guess?" She hoped she'd buy that. "You know how it is, when you're into someone and you miss 'em when they're not there..."

"No I don't know how it is, Delle!" She was storming at her now, ready to fight. "Your goddamn
fuck buddy stole that from me! He stole me from my husband while you get whatever your heart desires!

"Okay you need to back the fuck up," Delle was just as ready to fight too. "You and Dwight fucked up all on your own when you decided to run! Hell he might've even let you get away with it if you hadn't stolen all the fuckin' insulin too!" It was a possibility. "Stop blaming me for your shit fucking choices, Sherry! You keep actin' like I dug your grave when you're the fuckin' one holding the shovel!"

Delle had her there. She had tried to be creative in her problem solving, help Tina in the safest way possible; yes it might've meant indentured servitude, but she would've lived. No matter Sherry's dramatics, her sister would've still been alive if they'd just followed the plan. 'Why can noone ever just follow the fucking plan?'

"I...I can't be here anymore..." she whimpered, shaking her head rapidly. "This place is... it's poison."

'Shit. Okay.' "I can still get you out," Delle tried to sound calm, collected, though her nerves still felt raw. "You don't have to be here anymore; can get you back home."

She laughed bitterly. "Nothing feels like home anymore," her eyes narrowed on Delle, still strangely tearless. "But you're right; I don't have to be here anymore."

As cryptic as she sounded Delle tried to go along with it. "Exactly," she clasped her hands in front of her. "Two days. Two days and I'll get you gone."

"Right," Sherry seemed almost trance like, pushing past Delle to leave. "Gone."

She was left alone in her room, unease filling her stomach; or maybe that was just the pill kicking in.

Chapter End Notes

A few questions answered, even more raised; lots up in the air right now!

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Chapter 83

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Before...

"What the hell were you thinking!?”

Fang ducked as a plastic cup came hurtling towards his head, trying to remain calm and apologetic. "Delle now hold on, I'm sorry--!

"Oh you're sorry!?” This time it was a pillow from the couch as her projectile. The girl was livid. "You're fuckin' sorry!! You had no right to to tell him about Jordy, much less ask him to attack him!"

She'd been on a tirade since she'd got home; it was five in the morning now, and the only thing Fang was thankful for was that it was a burgeoning Saturday. No classes to be up for. "He said he wasn't gonna do it! And I was angry, I couldn't just stand by--"

"Yes you could have!” She protested, anger the only thing keeping her upright. "I did! I was standing by, swallowing down the urge to kill those fucks, but you couldn't just leave it well enough alone!?”

"They hurt you, I'm allowed to be mad!” He retorted.

"Yeah be mad, don't take out a fuckin' hit with your gym coach!” She raked her hands down her face, unaware that she could reach this level of aggravation. "One of his fuckin' friends came after me, dumbass!!"

That made Fang turn white as a ghost. "W-what!?"

"Yup!" She spat, grabbing a winter hat and chucking that too at her brother. "Saw what Negan did to his friend and came lookin' for me! Which never would've fuckin' happened if you just - fucking - listened!!" The air pulsed with the echo of her scream.

"Oh no," he spoke shakily, the cloud of anger disappearing and letting him see the stupidity, lack of logic in his bullheaded and chivalrous plan. "Oh god... I'm sorry Delle, I'm so sorry. Did he... are you...?"

She rolled her eyes and huffed, the fury subsiding here, but she'd still need to deal with Negan. For him her anger was a wildfire. "He couldn't do shit; the fucker couldn't take me one on one,” she was a little bit proud of that. "But he came to my fuckin' job, Fang. He stepped over such a massive boundary and I can't afford to lose more work. We can't afford that."

Fang's eyes threatened tears, now fully grasping the extent of his error. "My god... I'm sorry, I really never meant to do that, damn it-- I was just so angry, I felt so..."

'Powerless.' "I know," she sighed, letting her body relax into a little forgiveness and alot of
exhaustion. "I get what you're feeling, I do; but I don't need my honor defended, here. Why couldn't... why couldn't you just stick to the plan?"

Fang dared crossing the room, and when she didn't immediately throw things at him, he swept her up in a warm hug. "I'm sorry," he whispered, voice crackling and low. "I'm just so sorry..."

"I know." She muttered, patting his back; he wasn't off the hook yet but she wasn't going to berate him further. Not that night anyway, she'd run out of energy. With a purse of her lips and a shake of her head she retired for the night - day - knowing she'd have another fight on her hands the second she set eyes on Negan. *How could he do this?* Was her last clear thought before fatigue took her down, still in bar wear and boots.

She wasn't even aware that Negan was sat below, his truck idling on her street. Both had endured a difficult night, and now he wasn't sure she'd even speak to him.

Lucille hadn't made any sort of a connection as to Negan's real relationship with the young bartender; only that she was the sister of his star player. He'd had to admit that she was an ex student of his, no avoiding that; but the story she'd had to share still shook him to his core.

"This man came in," she'd sat right next to him, a feeling he barely recognized. "He was furious with her, kept going on about how she'd hurt his friend or something..."

"Really?" His voice strained with his response as he tried to keep his feelings at bay.

"It was so frightening! She kept telling him to leave, then he went to attack her--"

"Is she alright?" His love had got the better of him there, that painful swell of worry far too familiar in his chest.

"Y-yes," she'd replied; she found it sweet he still cared for his former student's wellbeing. "She held her own; thank god she was sweeping, I think she broke his nose with the broom."

'My little warrior...' The immorality of the situation wasn't lost on him; silently praising the girl he'd fallen for while his unaware wife laced her fingers with his. 'I could tell her. Come right out and say it; it'll be a shit show but I could finally be with her right...'

'Don't be stupid Negan, the girl would kill you if you pulled that!'

"It was horrid; I thought about calling the police, but she seemed so shaken, and she was really insistent about handling it all herself..." Lucille's voice trailed off then, wistful. "The poor girl; I wanted to help but she wanted to be alone. Must have to deal with that alot."

"What makes you say that?" He asked, though he could already figure what she'd meant.

"She just seemed like the type of girl who's only ever had herself to fight for her," Lucille's gentility and open heart had once been a selling point for Negan; he still admired those features, he just didn't love them like he used to. "I hope she turns out alright."

Negan cleared his throat; if he played his cards right he could alleviate his wife's worries while still keeping his association with Delle under wraps. "Y'know I think I remember her a little better, now," he nodded and cupped his chin for effect. "Was always a troublemaker, fought me on everything - never backed down. I bet she'll be just fine, hon.'"
Lucille then threw him a long look. "She might be tough, but sooner or later everybody needs someone to stick up for them."

He sighed in his truck, thinking of those words as he eyed the Cornishes' apartment building. "Not Delle Cornish," he shook his head. "Stuck up for her and now I might've fucked everything up for good."

She hadn't bothered to text him on her way home, too infuriated to string together anything but long chains of expletives and well-earned reproach; he couldn't blame her, but it didn't stop him from driving over once Lucille was well and deep in sleep, just to ensure there was no police activity at the building. Of course there wasn't, but he spent a large part of that hazy grey morning with a pitch black sky overhead staring at that complex, cursing himself over and over; if not for letting his heroic tendencies take over, then for not telling her what he'd done as soon as it was finished. Now her life had been threatened; and he couldn't stay on top of her 24/7.

'How do I keep managing to turn this all to shit?' He pondered, hands dangling across the steering. 'She's my girl, can't I protect her, fuckin' avenge her honor or some shit?'

'She's not your girl, Negan,' his angels stabbed him with their words. 'She's not the one with the ring on her finger. You ran off from that one yet again.'

He released a groan of a growl, eyes shutting in frustration. She wasn't his, no - and he knew every day he kept his love from Lucille was another day of hurt, another of humiliation she didn't even know about. He didn't hate his wife, no; he'd felt neglected to be sure, back when he thought Delle was just a crush, but far too many things had changed since then. He'd changed since then.

'I need to leave her.' It wasn't the first time that thought had popped into his head. Even if Delle kicked him to the curb, told him she could never set eyes on him again, Lucille and Negan were done. There are certain points you have to realize something is broken, and their marriage was in a million little pieces. 'She deserves someone who loves her right... just like Delle does.' If she'd only give the nod, the surrender, he'd drop everything for her. Would it be difficult, yes without a doubt; but he was a fighter as much as she was, and would gladly face the world if it meant he could claim her as his.

But who was he kidding? She wasn't even close to letting that be. Any fall out and she would blame herself over it all; if he lost his job, his friends, if their relationship cast a poor light on her brother. It no doubt would; he could hear the rumors in his head now:

'She was fucking the gym coach to get her brother on the team!'

'I heard he would do him too!'

'Somebody told me they'd have threesomes in his office!'

It made his stomach churn; one Cornish was more than enough, and he couldn't bear the damage those lies would do to both of them. Delle would fight tooth and nail, but Fang... brave though he was, he was more fragile than his sister. If the worst happened...

He definitely couldn't think about that.

The clock in his dashboard was threatening 5:30 AM; Lucille would likely be waking soon. He'd say
he'd been on a run, or checking something out at the school; his usual excuses, especially when his skin reeked of sweat and activity. Before switching into gear, he took up his cell phone; she didn't know he knew he was in trouble yet, so he had to be careful in crafting his message. If this was the last time she'd let him tell her how he loved her, he wanted to make it good.

5:28 - Hey babygirl, you didn't text me; double checked the alleyway just to be safe. Let me know when you get this. Don't know where I'd be without you, Delle. I love you. So much. -

Could he say anything more without giving himself away? He had volumes he could say, but she'd know immediately he'd learned what happened, and she'd try to guess how he knew; and then Lucille would come to light. He sighed and pressed the send function, deleting it as soon as it had sent. No need for the evidence.

He pulled away from the curb as dawn broke on the horizon, the apartment building struck by brilliant orange sunrise and the clinging shadows of night in his rear view mirror. 'God I hope I didn't lose her.'

Delle didn't wake up til late in the afternoon, head a little cloudy after such a late night. Her phone blinked with a message notification, and as she read Negan's words her heart bloomed in her chest, a silly smile on her lips; until her brain started working, and she remembered why she hadn't texted him the night before.

'Ooh right; I'm angry at this idiot.' Damn his charms, he made angry feel good. She rubbed a hand over her eyes, replying on her device.

4:13 -I'm fine, fuck head. We need to talk.-

She wouldn't let him off the hook too easily.

Chapter End Notes

Angst angst angst ! Because what is Delle Cornish without drama and heartache?

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Chapter 84

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Eugene was a headache - but he had some fun ideas.

Negan had taken to the idea of coating his dead garden in molten metal as soon as he'd heard it - it was practically and 'Fucking badass'! On top of being a bullet maker, he was creative; and Negan could always use creativity. Even the wives seemed halfway entertained by him and his little science experiments; and Negan needed them distracted.

He had a lot of lost time to make up for.

The day had proved fairly productive. Even with Simon and the outer teams not having located Daryl yet, the Sanctuary was running smoothly, he had a new, intelligent member of his council; and at that very moment he was back in his bed, his long lost wildfire riding him for dear life.

"Goddamn you got better at this, babygirl," his head dipped back into his pillows, eyes half closed but not giving up the sight of her bouncing there, the gasp in her mouth, the blush of her bare skin, the way his length disappeared with every roll of her hips. "How's that even possible?"

"I've always been goddamn great at this; your memory is goin', you fucking geezer," he swelled at her nickname for him; the added stretch making her groan. His hands dug in at the juncture of her hips and thighs, pulling her down as he thrust up hard in rebellion. "Awe, did I make you mad?"

"Fuckin' furious, sweetheart." That dimpled grin shone through the dark as he pounded upwards, letting her work her hips in time with his own; they both had their talents to show off.

"Mm-- I should get you mad more often," she sighed and arched, her hands falling to his thighs for leverage; with her body bent back she looked like a five star meal to his eye, and he'd never get his fill. "Makes you fuck me like you mean it."

"I always mean it, Delle," That earned her harder, pointed thrusts, the head of his cock jabbing into the spongy, oversensitive wall inside her; she bit her lip to keep from screaming, but couldn't hide a yelp when his thumb circled her clit in a frenzied pace. "C'mon baby, be as loud as you want; where's my screamer?"

A low moan broke from her throat, the present pleasure and memory of nights spent making her shriek his name were an intoxicating mix. With friendlier folk she might've screamed loud enough for all of Sanctuary to hear; but the walls were listening. "I-I'll be as loud as I want to be, fuck-!

Oh he loved that fight in her; always made it more rewarding when he could break her down. His arms flexed as he ceased her movements entirely, now just the rapid snap of his own body filling her as deep as he could go. "I'm gonna make all of fuckin' Sanctuary hear you," he rasped, a little haggard; she'd been casually inching him inside her channel for awhile now, and with the new brutality he brought it was hard to hold back. "Tell 'em who's fuckin' you so unbelievably good, babygirl."

Her head fell back, hair wild and brushing his legs as she felt the edge coming on fast. "F-fuck,
Negan...” she breathed, bringing one hand up to play with her breasts; she knew that would drive him wild.

“This dirty fuckin' cheat!” "Louder, baby,” he demanded, his digits now almost crushing her nub of nerves; just how she liked it. "Tell 'em who's makin' you come so hard..."

"Ahh-ah!” She whimpered, right at her precipice of release. "Goddamn it, Negan!” It was louder this time; not quite what he wanted, but he could feel her beginning to shake, eyes nearly rolling back in her head.

'Just a little more.' "Who's gonna fuck you into a goddamn coma tonight?"

It was so harsh, an oath nonetheless; she believed every word he said and it cinched the deal. She was already beginning to unravel when she did the only thing she could think of; falling forward with her release cascading over her, burying her face against Negan's skin and muffling the near roar of his name she emitted. 'Heh, loophole...'

As she tightened up around him, her body shivering on top of his, he lost his control; his rounded nails pressed into her flesh as he squeezed her close, emptying himself into the barrier between them. Sure, there was some level on which he wanted to pump her full of his seed, but just the opportunity to nestle into her soft skin and drink in her warm scent as he came made up for any lack of sensitivity. He wasn't about to get whiny just as she'd fallen back into his arms.

"You're a little shit," he panted through a laugh, running a hand through his sweat soaked hair. "Doesn't count if the Saviors can't hear ya."

"Bullshit - still screamed, still counts," she scratched at his ribs, pressing a kiss to his barely stubbled throat. "Take what you can get, old man."

She maneuvered herself off his softening cock gingerly, letting him take care of the simple sheath full of his swimmers; he sighed as he threw it into a nearby wastebasket, so much lost potential. "Feels like I'm in a safe sex commercial wearin' that shit," he settled onto his back, her head dropping against his shoulder like a puzzle piece. "Should I have a catchphrase? 'Don't be silly, wrap your willy' or somethin'?"

She laughed and threw her arm across his chest. "You're enough of a cartoon character without a catchphrase, Negan,” she closed her eyes. "You're fine as you are - but you keep distracting me.” Her fingers pinched his skin, but she was right; he'd not exactly been eager for the inevitable discussion of the parameters of their reunion, and some well placed fingers and kisses had pulled her attention to more sinful things... but he couldn't keep that up forever.

"Okay sweetheart, talk to me," he sighed, one arm going up to cradle his head while the other wrapped around her shoulder; god forbid the wrong answer make her run. "Let's hammer out all these gory details."

"The wives,” he assumed they would be the first thing on her mind; she likely didn't want to go through all the shit he'd put her through in the past. "First off... what the fuck was going through your mind when you thought that up?"

He shook his head, studying the grid of his ceiling. "I mean, I wasn't exactly lookin' at goin' celibate as the king of this castle," she didn't pull away, a sign for him to continue. "And hell; most of 'em volunteered. Would've been ungentlemanly to say no."
"Oh so you're a gentleman now?" The quip eased his worries, knowing he was still worth insulting. "And the ones who didn't sign up?" She was talking specifically of Sherry and Amber; one who had been coerced through her real husband's life, the other having married in for her family's safety.

Those, Negan wasn't so proud of; he'd been in a dark, twisted place before Delle had come along again, one where he thought his old self was dead. Then after the escape, right on the heels of Delle's illicit little escapade with Simon... that twisted place took hold all too easily. "There's not much excuse to offer there. I fucked up pretty hard on both of those."

She leaned up to meet his dark, genuine eyes in the darkness, reading his expression. "That you did," it surprised him when she leaned up, soft lips finding his in a reaffirming kiss. "Keep the wives. But no more sex."

His girl was always full of surprises; his mouth gaped a little, brows raised. "Really?"

She shrugged and cupped his face. "Do you love them?"

He blinked; the answer seemed blatant and obvious to him. "I mean I like 'em fine, for the most part... but no. I don't love 'em."

She smiled softly, cuddling in closer; she'd found a fresh taste for pillow talk with her tyrant, something they'd only done a handful of times. "Then keep 'em; keeps them alive, keeps your rep strong. I've never really been the type for the ring and the vows and the whole deal; just give me you, I'm happy."

'Fuck, she's makin' me all misty-eyed!' He grinned at her and nodded, massaging her scalp gently. "Alright. I'm sure I'll suffer through with grace," he was close to biting his tongue, but couldn't stop himself. "But I want you for my wife, eventually."

She felt a nervous shift in her being, something with a warm center wrapped in the ice of fear. He knew she loved her, but marriage? She'd only ever known it to be something limiting, something two people came to ruin or resent each other over; why damage what they had with promises they might not be able to keep? "I-I don't want to be caged, Negan; you know that."

He felt her body going rigid and slid his warm hand along her back in comfort. "I do know, Delle; but I'm not talkin' about some not-really-married trophy wife in an ivory tower shit. I want you by my side so long as I'm breathin' - the real thing."

Her heart held that warm fuzzy feeling, but her brain wondered how he could still hold so much faith in 'the real thing'. "It's too dangerous," she concluded. "I'm not staying locked up here, and if the enemy finds out you're carting around your wife, we'll both be easy targets."

"Darlin' you are never gonna be an easy target," he was right about that. "I'm not sayin' lets pop you into some undeserved white--" she swatted his chest for that. "--and mosey on down to the Chapel, fuck no; but I got plans."

She watched his face carefully; he was incredibly serious, yet somehow she got the sensation of being four years old, a grubby bunch of wildflowers in her hand as she pretended to marry her teddy bear. She held her belief in him, but that whole, old fashioned, old world institution - she didn't know if she could ever see the real value in that.
"Let's table that for peace time, shall we?" It was a bandaid on a bullet hole, but it would gloss over the topic for the time. "We have enough to worry about without writing sappy, vomit inducing vows."

"Alright," better to bend in these early hours of their rekindling; he wasn't looking to start a fight. "We can talk about that later. I'll work on ya." He winked; he'd worn her down this far, he could dig a little deeper. Her face relaxed a little, enough for him to know he'd said the right thing - for once.

"Glad we've come to an agreement there. Now then..." she took a breath; the next topic was touchy to say the least. "...Simon."

"Simon," he repeated in his gruff drawl, a growl escaping his throat despite himself. "To borrow your question, what the fuck was going through your mind when you thought that up?"

A hand came up to rub her face as she groaned. "Yeah, okay, I fucked up," she conceded. "Can't help it, I've got a type."

"Indeed you do, you little grave robber," he teased, letting the arm around her shoulder dip lower, curving around her front to squeeze at her tits. "But why go with a pale imitation when you can have the real goddamn thing?"

She gave him a strained look; in all the time she'd been at Sanctuary, they hadn't discussed their previous final days. "Negan, we didn't exactly part on good terms," she said softly. "With everything that happened... I half expected you to kill me or me to kill you the minute I realized who you were."

His mind flashed with those images; the tears, the heartbreak, the hospital, the move. He could hear himself begging her, then the screaming, the crying. It hadn't been pretty. "Fair," he murmured, letting his hand relax and press into her side. "But why fucking Simon?"

"Because he's hot!" She winced at his involuntary response, nails digging into her flesh. "Oh calm down; I'm here, aren't I? I just... he was kind, he liked me; it had been ages since I'd fucked anything but my fingers, so I... indulged."

He grumbled, but nodded; it wasn't like he'd stopped fucking his wives in her presence, if with a lack of real interest. It became primal for him, as he hoped it'd been with her; as he knew it hadn't been for Simon. "Y'know he's kind of obsessed with you now. Pretty sure you've got magic between your legs, sweetheart."

"I know, it's fucked me over once or twice," her head dropped into his chest, drowning herself in his smell, his heat. "He's gonna be so mad."

"He's gonna fuckin' deal with it," Negan declared. "I can't get rid of him, he's damn near indispensable at this point; but you're all mine now," she huffed as he flipped her over, a thigh splitting her legs as he grinned down at her. "And I'm not sharin'."

She hummed as his mouth dove to her neck, open kisses painting her skin; it seemed he was done talking, trying to distract her again. "M-maybe he doesn't need to know... not just yet."

He paused and raised his head, meeting her gaze. "You want to sneak around a little bit, baby?"

She could feel her cheeks pinking up in spite of herself. "It'll be safer for now. Not gonna fuck him or anything; but it's best if he doesn't think there's any overlap, much less he finds out about our early
years."

"My little genius," he bit down into her throat, teeth grazing and bringing forth a moan. "So just to recap, I keep the wives, you dump Si, I get to keep screwing you, and nobody finds out?"

Her mind first went to Sherry and all she knew; but she’d be out of her hair shortly. Not even worth mentioning. "Exactly," she breathed and pulled at his hair playfully. "Gold star for you, teach."

"Thanks, but I’m goin' for an A plus," her body angled as he slipped lower, throwing her legs over his shoulders, his tongue tracing circles on her thighs. "How 'bout I show you the alphabet?"

'Fucking hell.' "Let's see how far you get." But as he licked past her folds, she knew he’d have her coming by "Q".

By morning sleep had managed to worm its way into the bed, and Delle woke to sunlight streaming across her body, laced up in his sheets with her head on his chest. It was early, she knew that much; and yet wasn’t feeling the least bit tired. She stared up at her lover, the man she'd spent so long resisting, thinking of all the toxicity they brought out in each other; it hadn't even occurred to her that said poison was so delicious, so... completing. It felt sentimental and shmaltzy to admit it, but all curled up with him, finally succumbed, she felt more whole than she had in years. 'Since the last time we were happy...' it was a sad thought, a longing for an era of simplicity before terror overtook the world; but there was nothing to go back to, nothing to turn on. They could only surge forward, and that's just what she planned to do.

"I can feel you starin', sweetheart," his eyes were still shut but his grin was slowly forming for the first time that day, a hand placed greedily on her backside. "Up n’ at em early, huh?"

"Sorry gramps, young folks aren’t accustomed to sleeping in til four in the afternoon," she shook from his grasp, sliding onto her feet. "Can't keep the masses waiting."

"I can for that view, goddamn," he watched from his back as her bare form swayed in the daylight, collecting her clothes and redressing. "Could watch that ass on loop for days, babygirl."

"You'd go cross eyed eventually," clothed and ready to sneak off for the day, she gave his arm an exaggerated tug. "C'mon, let's go! Empire to run and all that bullshit!"

He chuckled and acquiesced, getting on his customary leathery get up. "Just my luck I fell in love with a slave driver," he mocked, sweeping his hands behind her back to pull her near. "Rulin' me with an iron fist, ain’t ya?" She laughed and he went to fetch Lucille from her newer spot; propped right next to the bed, out of sight line of the goings on between Negan and Delle. He'd barely got two steps when a loud thud from his door caught his ear. "What the fuck?" He sighed and made his way over, opening the door to Sherry.

But she wasn't Sherry anymore.

It was her body, but her normally dewy skin was sallow and greying, veins popping in blue, her eyes glazed and white with death; her mouth, neck and chest were coated with blood, remnants of flesh, while both of her arms boasted long, lethal slices up her wrists. Sherry was gone. And she was starving.

"Holy fuck!" Negan nearly fell backwards as his undead wife lunged for him, freshly dead hands grasping at his limbs, trying to pull him in for a bite. The sight was shocking, his brain barely
processing every movement, the gnash of her teeth, the way her jaw nearly enclosed on his wrist before he saw Lucille come down, cracking her skull once, twice, three times; til that once beautiful face was totally unsalvageable, brain completely obliterated. He was gasping for air and staring at Delle, herself panting from exertion; she was spattered in Sherry's blood, Lucille still firm in her grip.

"Negan!" A male voice from the hallway called out, thundering footsteps. Suddenly Gary was in the doorway, spattered in blood with a hunting knife in hand. "Holy shit are you alright?" Only then did he notice Delle. "What are you doing here...?"

"What in the fuck happened!?" Negan's roar shook the very air, storming past Sherry's still corpse to his Savior. "Why the hell did I open my damn door to my dead-alive wife!?"

Gary balked, tumbling back into the hall. "W-we-- so far as we can tell she killed herself during the night..."

'Oh god,' Delle's thoughts finally caught up with her, Lucille hitting the floor as her hands flew to her mouth in horror. 'She really meant gone.'

"Fucking christ..." Negan shook his head, staring down at the body before realizing the worst. The wives shared their quarters. "Wait, what about the others--?"

Gary hung his head in shame, giving it a slight shake. 'Fucking fuck!' Negan barreled past him, taking the few turns through his hallways to the wives' rooms; and entered a literal bloodbath.

Sherry must have killed herself silently; long after the other wives had gone to sleep, as each body he found bore bites, Tanya tragically and totally ripped apart. Sherry had been eating her. The remaining wives now all sported killing stabs in their skulls, one of Amber's pretty eyes marred where the knife had gone through; even the low level guard who watched them during the night had fallen to the virus. Now, their remains laid strewn across their home, their safe haven; all by Sherry's doing. All by her belief that dead was better than Sanctuary.

He had no words, staring at the aftermath of such a horrific incident. They were right on the cusp of freedom - or something close to it - and Sherry had stolen it away. Hell, she might've been sinking her teeth into one of them at the very same moment Delle had been bargaining for their lives.

"Oh Jesus christ." His head snapped up to Delle's eyes, wide bright and shocked, taking in the same scene. This is my fault,' she kept repeating over and over to herself. This is my doing... if I'd just been smarter, faster...' her eyes pricked with tears as Negan's arms engulfed her, his body blocking her vision from the blood and carnage.

In a matter of minutes, Negan had become a widower six times over; and it only fueled his protectiveness.

He couldn't lose Delle now; not for anything in the world.

Chapter End Notes

So I'm really diverging here, but I like where it's going I think.
I'm going to take 2 days and not post anything. I'm a little burnt out and I need to get some stuff in order to get the words flowing right.

If you'd like to comment I'd really appreciate it; I get the feeling the last chapter went over poorly.

So leave a comment, bookmark me so you know when the next chunk is comin' - this isn't the end of Delle yet, no sir!
Dwight wasn't the same after the attack.

He'd been on a run for supplies when the worst had fallen on Sherry; by the time he'd rolled through the gates, hers and six other bodies were burning, traces of their blood scrubbed from every surface. In some ways it was as if they'd never existed in the first place; but Dwight knew they had. Knew that she had been his; and he wouldn't forget that loss.

He, of course, couldn't act on his grief out of decorum; he was noone to Sherry anymore, just another Savior. Negan had been her husband, and had delivered a near laughable eulogy as her remnants slid into the furnace.

"Hotter than hell, Sherry was," he'd said with a dip of his body. "Excuse the pun."

Delle watched Dwight throughout the ramshackle funeral - funerals - his face a mottled mask to hide his hurt. Delle knew that hurt, to lose someone she loved and feel useless to do anything for them. It was a pain indescribable until one got the bad luck to feel it first hand - and Dwight had been struck with it in full force. She had to do something.

She knocked at his open doorway - as it often was - poking her head in to check on him days later. "Hey."

He didn't lift his gaze from the television in the corner, playing some 1980s program on tape, but he grunted a welcome.

"Uh..." 'What do I say? Sorry I got your wife killed?' She shifted from foot to foot. "The um... Laura and some of the guys are playin' table hockey... you want to join in?"

He shook his head but didn't speak, didn't look at her. 'He's got every right not to move a muscle.'

"Alright-- maybe want to split a drink? Used up a few points, got a decent bottle of scotch." Dwight didn't know Delle lived in a points-less paradise, but he didn't need to.

Again, he shook his head no.

The air felt thick and heavy around her, like walking away would be like walking through waist high snow. "Okay... Dwight?" She let her fingers rest on the door frame, studying the back of his head. "I... I'm sorry about Sherry." She could see him visibly straighten in his chair, head turning just barely, profile peeking out from behind his mop of stringy flaxen hair.

"She wasn't my wife," the sadness in his tone was palpable, as if she herself had been struck through the heart by tragedy. "And she took down all the girls with her. It was a stupid move."

Delle's gaze dropped; of course he'd respond that way, Negan had trained him to. "It was selfish," she agreed, in honesty. "But she loved you."
"Nah," he grumbled, turning his attention back to the TV. "I'm not the same man she remembered."

The despair for his hopelessness hit her first; followed quickly by her suspicion. She'd used that same phrasing with Negan, the same Sherry had used on her. Maybe the once married couple had been closer than she thought.

"Did Negan want something?" He asked, still seemingly engrossed by characters with frizzy hair and shoulder pads. "Is that what you're doin' down here?"

"No, I just--"

"Come n' get me if he needs me," Dwight didn't want to socialize with anyone, much less Delle. "Please leave me alone."

She didn't bother with a goodbye, simply pulled his door shut and left. From where she'd been standing she couldn't see his hands - in one was grasped his wedding ring, as well as Sherry's own and engagement. In the other was a note containing the last words his wife would ever share with him.

And she'd had some choice words about Delle.

Delle, of course, had no idea what Sherry had written about her; had no idea there was a letter at all as she traipsed up to the outer levels, making for the courtyard. Gavin and Jared were due back from the Kingdom, and though she hated about 50 percent of that pair, but the Kingdom tended to have the best share of fruit from the communities, and if she helped to unload she might get first pick of produce.

However, Gavin and Jared didn't ride alone that day; they had guests.

She reminded Delle of a deer; unusually tall, slender and with long limbs, the woman who stepped from the truck with her apparent followers surveyed the grounds with a sort of unimpressed curiosity. All dressed in black like they were playing assassins, they moved and stared like they were sizing up everything they saw, human or otherwise.

"Delle!" Gavin's voice cut through her stare, catching up with his new friends and leading them to the young Savior.

"Hey Gav'," she replied, still wary of the lithe, judgemental woman. "I see you brought company."

He nodded, taking a breath. "They've got some pretty interesting info. Is Negan around?"

"Checking the log books," she knew he'd probably still be at it, there was plenty to pour over. "Is what they got to say really worth disturbing him?"

Gavin's face held a genuine honesty as he nodded. "We're all gonna want to hear this."

It didn't take much to prompt Negan from his books - they were a necessary but tedious part of the position - and within minutes he and his lieutenants on grounds were in the meeting chamber, waiting on their visitors to speak. Delle noted that this had managed to draw Dwight from his cave, coiled into a chair halfway down the table.

"So um," Gavin, though smart could be a little lacking in words. "This is Jadis; she's the leader of the
Scavengers."

Negan's brow raised; he was fairly certain he'd known of all the surviving groups in the area. It bothered him that he didn't. "The Scavengers?" He repeated. "How is it we've never run across you folks before?"

Jadis' head tilted in an odd way, processing his words. "We careful," she replied, a smug tone in her voice. "We take; we don't bother. Noone bother us."

'What the hell?' Delle's arms were crossed in her seat to Negan's left, trying to make heads or tails of this unusual team.

"I see," Negan breezed right by the strange way of speaking, cutting to the meat of the conversation. "So why come botherin' us, if you don't bother?"

What could be called a smile played at the woman's mouth, knowing but secretive. "Told us about you. Wanted better deal."

"Who did?" He asked, though he was already getting an inkling.

"The man, Rick," 'Of fucking course.' "And his people. Want help, bring down Saviors."

It didn't surprise him, no; Rick struck him as the rebellious type the moment they met. He was far to accustomed to his own way of doing things, and wasn't about to let Negan - or someone like him - tell him otherwise without a fight. 'If he wants a war he'll fucking get one.' "So you tracked us down? The hell do we need you for?"

"You make better deal for us," Jadis explained. "They not know we fight with you. Take them out."

'Shit that isn't so bad of an idea.' He gave the group his thousandth once-over; they were strange, no denying that, but could they be worthwhile? Or should he not even bother? "You really have enough manpower to make a difference? Alexandria's no small potatoes."

There was that knowing, smug smile again; Delle decided she didn't much like it. "We have many. Many to fight. Many to feed. Good deal, we are yours."

He tapped his fingers against Lucille, perched on his shoulder. "Show me."

Delle's head turned to him then, reasonably worried; with Alexandria it was clear what they were getting into. This new group was strange, and could possibly hold a sizeable number of people. He caught her gaze, giving a little dip of his head. 'Don't worry baby, I got this.'

"You would see us?" Jadis clarified; she didn't seem like the type that regularly hosted visitors.

"Damn straight," he stood, shadow cast long across the table. "I'm not cashin' in my chips on you if I haven't even seen your game," Jadis turned to whisper indistinguishably to her own people; she'd misinterpreted his statement. "Don't go muttering over there, lady. It wasn't a question; you show me what you got, then I decide if you're worth our time."

This threw the deer-like woman off; she didn't negotiate often, but when she did she usually held the power. In other company, maybe, but she was talking to a man comprised of power. She'd have to bend. "W-we do not bring people in," she stammered; was her dialect wavering? "We will help; for
right deal."

"And I'm not shakin' on shit til I see what I'm dealin' with!" Negan paced his way to the end of the table, leaning to meet Jadis eye to eye. "Now you can take us back to see your little operation, or you can kiss that home of yours goodbye."

That made her mind up real quick. She learned fast not to try and one-up a man like Negan.

Dwight, Laura, Arat and several lesser Saviors made up the survey team that would travel with Negan to Jadis' home; and Delle was hopping mad not to have made the short list. It wasn't that she expected special treatment or that it seemed like a particularly interesting outing; it felt as if since the wives' deaths, Negan was slowly building up a cage around her, wire by wire. And she was not one for confinement.

"I'll radio back on the private frequency when we get there," he had tried to be reassuring but she was pissed, frustrated. "And when we leave." He had her alone in a small enclave, just far enough away from the hubbub of the mission.

"You're tryin' to bench me," she hissed, a finger jabbing into his chest. "You got all spooked 'cause of Sherry and you're tryin' to make me a shut-in."

"Yeah it fuckin' spooked me!" He whispered a gruff agreement, hoping not to incite more anger. "But I'm not benching you; you're just not the right call for this team."

"I can defend myself," she protested still, even when she knew she didn't have a chance of going. I'm not some hopeless child, I'm worth keepin' on runs--"

"I know," his voice was firm, his hand lacing into her hair, grip sturdy but comforting. "You're not gettin' caged here, I swear -- but you have to listen to me. Stay here, keep shit handled. This is where I need you."

Her eyes studied his face intently. There was plain worry behind his eyes, he was fearful of the worst now more than ever for her; but there was a greater acceptance that he couldn't keep her behind the fences, she would never stay still without being cuffed and bound. "...fine." she finally let up, her shoulders relaxing, the tight grip on her hair doing the same.

"Good girl," he muttered, glancing to the unoccupied hallway before pressing a heated kiss to her lips. "I'll come back soon. And when I do I'm goin' to fuck you into next week."

'Oh Negan, you and your sweet talk.' A small smile crept to her face, pressing her body to his. "I'm gonna hold you to that, geezer."

It put a perk in his step as he made his way to the transport trucks, cramming into the front seat along with Jadis and Arat. He hoped the trip would prove fruitful; he couldn't wait to sink his teeth into his sweet little Delle as soon as he got back.

But someone else was racing back to Sanctuary quicker than he was; someone Delle was nervous to face alone. And as his raised truck rolled into the grounds, she felt a sudden heaviness fall over her.

Simon had come home first.
And we're back!

A few updates:
I got a question askin' about posting schedule; I post every chapter at midnight EDT so I consider the following day to be one full cycle :3

I got some good writing done on my break (or maybe I did? You tell me!)

I got to hear from some folks I don't normally do in the comments section, so welcome!
I love you all, write me on however you feel my chapters are going :)

Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU!♡♡♡♡
"Little miss psycho!" Simon's arms outstretched to her as he finally tracked her down, walking amongst the chicken coops. It was an odd place to be; but not so much considering she was avoiding him. "There's my smart girl."

She accepted his hug without resistance, reminded briefly of how long his limbs were, how good he smelled; it would make what she had to do that much harder. "Hey bean pole," she greeted him, trying not to sound nervous. "What has you back in these parts?"

"Laundry, mostly," he joked, that wide smile highlighting bright white teeth. "No, just here to restock on ammunition, change out a few guns. Variety is the spice of life, as they say."

'Don't I know it,' she scoffed within herself, shying from his eye slightly. 'Just gotta tell him, break it off quick.'

"Simon, I--"

"Don't suppose you've seen the big guy around?" She thanked her stars he hadn't immediately asked her to sleep with him; she wasn't about to be caught between a rock and Negan. "Should check in with the old slave driver, god forbid I breathe without his say so..."

She couldn't really hold him in contempt for that; Negan was omnipresent, and if he found out Simon was talking to her, all alone... "Breathe easy; he's out doin' some fact finding."

"Really?" His brows raised and his head tilted back, hands coming to rest on his hips. "And he didn't take his little maniac? Does he have a death wish?"

She smirked; it was easy to see how she'd picked him. Charming, funny, handsome - and old enough to flex Delle's daddy issues in just the right way. But it just wasn't love.

"I know, he's nuts," she threw her hands up, passing by Simon for the indoors. "Said something about wanting me to keep an eye on things here."

"Heh; right," he tailed after her like a hungry puppy. "Probably wants his best lookin' after the wives."

She stopped dead in her tracks. 'Oh fucking hell.' "Guess you didn't hear?" She turned to meet his eyes, evenly confused. "Negan's a widower now."

Simon looked legitimately surprised; not necessarily all that shaken up over the news, but as far as she knew he'd never been chummy with the wives. "Jesus-- which one went?"

"All of 'em," his mouth dropped open. "Yep, threw us all for a fuckin' loop. Sherry shuffled off the mortal coil and took the rest of the harem with 'em." It was a tasteless way of putting it, but fit better with how Simon knew her.

"Goddamn; I leave for 5 seconds and this whole place goes to hell," he chuckled. "Suppose he's already holdin' tryouts for the next fiancé, though."
She felt a little pang in her chest at that; knowing there was only one woman Negan wanted as a fiancé now, and she was it. She jerked her head to the doors, continuing her path. "Not with all the shit Alexandria is tryin' to pull."

"You kiddin' me? I was just there!" He was at her side now, listening with eager ears. "You've gotta catch me up, twisted!"

And so she did. They camped out at a table in the general hall, all the workers of Sanctuary avoiding them as they told all the things they had missed in each other's absences. Delle explained about the Scavengers, the deal for soldiers that Alexandria had tried to convince them of, how Negan had gone off to seek them out. She went on about Carl's little invasion, the tour of Sanctuary, the trip back to Alexandria and Spencer's death; when she mentioned Lucille taking a bullet lined for Negan, she could see the faintest trace of disappointment tugging at his mustached mouth. She brushed it off, but banked the reaction to tell Negan of later.

Life was fairly routine at the outpost, according to Simon; pop over to the Hilltop periodically to confirm their strength, collect their offerings. He was more than a little annoyed that the scotch he'd sent back to Sanctuary had been ruined by clumsy hands.

"Know that's one of your favorites," he said; she felt a little guilt at that. "Y'know, if Negan had let you have any."

She bit her tongue to avoid saying 'of course he knows I like scotch!' - her lips seemed eager to blow her cover. "Maybe next time."

Then came Daryl's impulsive little outing; his men had been combing the land trying to find him, searching everywhere between Alexandria to the Hilltop. Unfortunately, they hadn't found hide or hair of the upstart Alexandrian.

In its absolution their conversation took them to the early hours of the morning, at that point just spouting old stories and anything that popped into their heads. 'I forgot how easy it was to talk to him,' Delle thought wistfully through a laugh. 'Why'd we have to go and ruin that with sex?'

"Jee-sus christ, it is late!" Simon remarked, yawning dramatically. "Time flies when you're havin' fun, huh?"

"Clearly," she stood from their table and he followed suit, taking the route to her room; she hadn't been back to her own place in days. "Should really get some shut eye."

"Would you be adverse to me keepin' you up a little later?" It felt like ice water down her back as his hand slipped to her waist, his words right by her ear. "Has been awhile..."

She slid away from his grasp, pressing her back to the concrete wall. 'Lets try and make this as painless as possible.' "About that, Simon... we should talk."

The color left his face in a flash, expression now sullen and worried. "Oh shit-- did he tell you about Oceanside?"

Her brows knitted in confusion. "Oceanside? What're you talkin' about?"

Well, at least Negan hadn't outed him on that mess of a massacre; but why the need for talk, then?
"What has you so antsy, Twisted?"

*I'm gonna miss that nickname.* She was already feeling some nostalgia for the easy repartee she would no doubt dash with her words. "I just... I don't think we should keep up with the sex angle of our friendship." Clarifying it as friendship was important - they weren't a couple, he needed to know that.

He wasn't thrilled, obviously; for a moment he felt the darkness in him bubbling up, but he forced it down. *'Gonna try to be civilized.'* "Oh... uh, if you don't mind me askin', why?" He raised a brow and crossed his arms, unconsciously putting a few inches more distance between them. "Thought we were pretty hot n' heavy the last time we fucked, were we not?"

*He's got a point there.* True, Simon was a veritable stud in the sheets; but her heart wasn't in it, if it ever had been. No, her heart now laid a few doors down from him, wrapped in leather and barbed wire. "We were," she sighed, tilting her head. "Really goddamn hot, but I just... I need sex, that's all - and I get the idea you're feelin' more than that."

His mouth pursed in a reluctant agreement. He'd fought for her to come with him, hoping proximity would eventually sway her his way; but it appeared fate had other plans. "Well, can't say you're wrong, can I?"

A part of her wished that he had; tell her she'd been a new hole to fuck, tell her he'd found someone else to warm his bed at the outpost. *'Why'd he have to be so... understanding?'* "I kinda figured; and I just hate the idea of you all hung up over a girl who just... doesn't feel that way."

"I mean, could you? Time's not exactly a guarantee now, but give it a few more months--"

"Simon," she placed her small hand on his shoulder. "I've been down this road before; I'm a sexual being, but some guys just... they want more. And when that gets mixed up it never ends well," she smiled a sad smile, truly apologetic for hurting him. "Please, let me save you from all that fall out."

He didn't love what he was hearing; it just didn't seem like her. How could she have changed so much since the last time they'd been together? "Is there... is there somebody else?" He asked, dark eyes trying to ferret out the truth in her face. "I mean I know we weren't exactly goin' steady, but if it's somebody else, just tell me." God he hoped it wasn't Negan; he wasn't sure if he could control himself if it was.

Now she had to spin an all out lie; thankfully, she'd grown talented at those. "There's noone else," she fibbed through her teeth. "Haven't even fucked anybody since you left - the saint that I am," *'Saint with a pitchfork and horns!'* Her angels weren't pleased. "I just don't want to do this to you anymore. Please, Si," she let her hand rest on his cheek; a little more familiar than she'd intended, but they were familiar friends. "You don't deserve to get hurt." *'Finally, the truth.'*

He'd bend for now; but that didn't mean he was done trying to win her over. *'I've got time.'*  
"...Alright, if this is what you want," he huffed; he could've thrown a tantrum and Delle would've been fine with it. He had a right to anger; but he recognized his own volatile temper in the moment, choosing to rein it in. He stretched out his arms, more lackluster than in his greeting. "Don't suppose I could hug you one more time? Last image for lonely nights?"

She let her shoulders relax, giving him a sweet smirk as her arms wrapped under his, fingers pressing to the muscles of his back as his encircled her, cupping her waist and cradling her hair. On impulse, she kissed his cheek and closed her eyes. "I'm sorry, Si," she murmured, enjoying his scent one last
time. "It's better this way."

Of course, that opinion wasn't shared by all; but what mattered more was who else was present for that embrace.

"Simon!" 'Oh fuck me and his fucking timing!' She pulled away slow and deliberately, not wanting to infer anything to Simon -- though as Negan strode down the hallway towards them, boots stomping, Lucille bobbing and holding a stare that screamed 'get your paws off my girl!', he might as well have kissed her outright. "Been a fuckin' while, pal!"

"Negan," he nodded, unaware he was wedging his body between his boss and Delle. "Good to see ya; heard you had a pretty big day."

"Oh, huge," he snickered, but there was still brash murder in his eyes. "Got lots to talk about! But it can wait til tomorrow, you're probably dyin' for your bed and not some ratty-ass outpost cot, huh?"
He clapped his lengthy arm around his second-in-command's shoulder, redirecting him to the higher ups' floor. For a moment, Delle thought she was done for the evening and would be able to slink off to bed unnoticed; but no such luck. "Delle! Catch up, small fry!"

'Fuck you, small fry!' She hoofed it to catch up with their naturally long legs, winding up the stairwells as Negan kept a tight grip on his right hand man.

"Was sorry to hear about the wives, boss," Simon offered in genuine condolence. "Must've stung."

It hadn't been fun; but Delle proved to be more than capable in consoling him, over and over again. "Caught me off guard, let me tell ya," he shook his head; for the most part, none of them had been terrible people. Sherry had robbed them of alot. "Room still stinks like their blood."

"Fuck," Simon instinctively opened the door to their floor for Negan, both he and Delle sauntering through. "That's goddamn eerie."

"No shit; think this place is probably haunted now," he stopped at Simon's door and would've kicked it down if it wouldn't spoil their previous plan. "You get your beauty sleep, Si; we'll go over the unholy fisting Alexandria just bought themselves come daylight."

"Sure..." he glanced past Negan to let his gaze fall on Delle; disappointment clouded his impression of her, as well as an inkling of distrust. There had to be something else, some other cause; he didn't want to admit that cause was staring him in the face, grinning like a hungry wolf. "Good night, Twisted... I'll see you around."

"G'night, bean pole," she replied softly, smiling as sympathetically as she could. "Sweet dreams."

He nodded, shuffling his way into his old room; somehow it felt colder and far less welcoming than it had since he'd been there last. Or maybe that was just the loss of Delle. Either way, he knew he'd be up later, trying to quell the unruly blackness bubbling in his heart, a dangerous mix of suspicion, heartbreak and vengeance.

As soon as that door was latched Negan's large hand wrapped tight around Delle's wrist, and in as quick a movement he was barging down the hallway, her short legs struggling to keep up.

"Hey--! Negan what the fuck!?!" She growled low, not wanting the wrong ears to hear her; he didn't reply, she just watched the back of his head as he stormed along, past his own quarters, dragging her
to the common areas, and finally the Saviors' meeting room. He practically threw her inside, slamming the door shut behind him with his boot and engaging the lock. "What the hell was that about!?"

In a fluid action her ass was up on the long table, his body splitting her legs as one hand gripped her throat; firm, but not choking. Lucille rolled across the table, all but forgotten.

"You were a bad girl while I was away, Delle."

'Uh oh, New Negan.'

Chapter End Notes

I know I'm terrible with the cliffhangers, but this chapter would've been way too long otherwise!

Boy is she in for it though.

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Under Negan's grasp, his eye burning with cold, possessive lust, Delle remembered just how much bigger than her he was; he close to a foot of height on her, and as his arms held her tight even her strength seemed diminished. And oh, he was angry.

"He had his arms around you," he snarled, long fingers pulling at her hair, harder than she expected. "What made him think he could touch you?"

"Calm your ass down!" She snapped back; though the intense closeness, his breath heated on her lips as he drew in tighter was already stirring something in her. "I was breakin' things off - would've been nice and inconspicuous if you hadn't come along like some jealous husband!"

"What would he have got away with if I hadn't been there?" He barely registered what she'd said; somehow the image of them in a friendly embrace made him angrier than staring at them amidst sex had.

"Absolutely fucking nothing, dumbass!" She went to swat at his arm, but his second hand swept both of her wrists behind her back, holding securely. "It was a goodbye-hug, goddamn it!"

"And what else did he want? A goodbye-kiss?" With that their lips met, his mouth starved and aggressive as teeth tugged at her bottom lip, tongue dominating and swirling her own; she didn't balk though, suckling that thick pink muscle and drawing out an animalistic groan from him. "A goodbye-blow job? A goodbye-pussy eating?" He dragged his face to her ear, nibbling at her lobe and tracing the shell; she hated how he knew her sweet spots, how to cool her anger and ignite her fervor. "You think he would've tasted me in your sweet little cunt?"

The concept had her suddenly soaked, and the spread of her legs forcing her quickly engorging clit against the seam of her denim only doubled his efforts. As much of an insecure idiot he was being, he was getting her hotter by the second. "Mm... fucking christ you're such a clingy bastard! Nothing would've fucking happened--Ahh!"

Her back arched, her arms still incapacitated as the hand in her hair shoved itself roughly down her jeans, the rough pads of his fingers finding her wet and wanting, a smirk driven to his face. "You are goddamn drenched, bad girl," he husked, immediately falling into harsh rotations around her clit. "Is this all for me? Or does Simon share the fuckin' spotlight tonight?"

She moaned initially, her head falling back as her body ached to submit to him; but Delle Cornish never goes down without a fight. "F-fuck you, you misogynistic caveman--damn it!" Her toes curled in her boots as those long fingers sank into her core, three at once, curving in and prodding her sweet spot.

"You callin' me an animal for havin' what's mine, little girl?" He snorted, fingers finding hard thrusts despite the limited movement in the garment. "I should turn you over and fuck you like a bitch in heat, if you're gonna hurt my feelings like that..." her deep whimper at that put him deeper into his efforts, all threw digits stroking her walls in a mismatched rhythm, stimulation never pausing.
"Mm shit, ahh-- you're so," she was getting close, and fast - the way his fingers pumped into her, the heel of his palm mashing against her clit in constant pressure - it was a perfect storm. "F-fucking needy-!" She gasped against his mouth as he kissed her so forcefully, close to bruising, both groaning to each other. He was smart enough not to mark her where anyone would see, but the littlest bite at the inside of her lip would go unnoticed; and as she tasted iron mixing between their mouths, it brought on new lust, a new intensity to their already ferocious entanglement.

"Sure, call me needy," he growled, pulling away with a trace of redness on his mouth. "It's your pussy strangling my fingers, all desperate to come - you want that, you want it so fucking bad don't you? Go on girlie, let go, come for me."

She tried resisting - but not very much, her body already shivering and convulsing, her pussy seizing around his actions, guaranteeing a wet spot in the curve of her jeans as her climax hit, hard and brutal, just like him. "Ahh fu-fuck there, there, N-Negan...!" He barely let up or slowed down, the steady press of his fingers extending her orgasm and forcing her eyes to roll back, her mouth going slack in overwhelming arousal.

"That's my fuckin' girl," he muttered into her ear, teeth dragging against her lobe again, letting his hands find new missions while she still wafted through an afterglowing haze. One set to work on undoing the button fly of her pants, the other shoving up the front of her shirt to expose those bare tits he loved to tease. "You come for me, and only me, right?"

"O-of course, you dumbass." She breathed, body twisting and writhing as both hands met at her chest, tugging and pinching her nipples into stiff peaks.

"Was lookin' for more of a 'yes sir' but from a little shit like you," he twisted on hand, her rosy bud with it, making her buck and nearly shriek. "I'll take it."

"It'll be a cold day in hell when I call you fucking sir, dickwad," her hands set to their own actions as his moved across her body, squeezing his favorite parts; she unzipped his leathers, forcing him to let go long enough to shove it from his arms. "You're still bein' a jealous pig." She chided, running her hands up his back to drag her nails down his skin.

"Oh you're so fuckin' mouthy, you little shit!" He grinned, knowing exactly what was in store; he caught her off guard, his strong arms flipping her onto her belly, skin suddenly chilled by the table's surface, and the fluid motion of Negan shoving her denim down to her ankles. "I can't wait to make it scream." She could hear the unbuckling of his belt, the zip of his pants. She knew he wasn't about to pause to roll on a rubber, but with all the tension pumping through her body she didn't even care; she needed him deep, in a hurry.

"Like you even could, you timid little douchebag." she panted, planting her palms on the table, ready and craving what was to come.

He drank in the sight of her, skin nearly shining in moonlight, ass perfectly rounded and legs spread just enough to see her pussy, pink and greedy. He growled and pulled his cock free from its confines, stroking once or twice but already hard as steel. "Oh I think I can, you bad little girl," she yelped as his second hand smacked her rear, a handprint forming quickly. "I'm gonna fuck you so hard and so good we're gonna split the fuckin' table."

His velvety head pressed at her entrance, almost instantly coated in her slick as she whimpered, wiggling her hips to egg him on. "I'll believe that when I see it, gee-aah!" He slid home completely in one long thrust, every inch buried inside her and stretching her around him, fingers dug into her
"Best start believin', baby," there was no preamble, no overture; his hips snapped hard against hers and set a merciless pace, bottoming out with every thrust into her wet heat. Her moans excelled every time his tip pressed furthest in, mouth agape with pleasure. "This sweet, tight little cunt is mine, do you hear me?" She whimpered in answer, at the moment her body was more concerned with the sensation of touch, not of hearing; but a hard thrust coupled with another hefty spank snapped her out of it. "Speak when you're spoken to, Delle!"

In the face of total and utter control, his hands sliding around her while his hips rolled into her over and over, she finally relented. "Y-yes-!" She gasped, feeling his lips press along her spine, nipping at the back of her neck. "Yes, fuck, yours!!"

"About - fucking - time!" He pounded her into the table with every word, hands wrapping around her to massage her tits, somehow his efforts growing harder, faster. "These tits are mine," one hand went back to her hips, another slap landing on her ass. "This ass is mine," finally the second hand jerked her head to the side, far enough to meet her mouth with his, teeth and tongues warring. "This mouth is mine - you are all fucking mine..."

"Y-yeah," the word was barely a breath in her throat, her eyes beginning to glaze and roll back. "F-fucking yours, Negan." That admission, submission, had him swelling, his balls tightening with an oncoming orgasm; the smell of their sex, the feel of her cunt, the sound of her moans and the slap of skin against skin was an intoxicating, addictive mixture. 'We gotta do this again.'

"You're goddamn right you are," he growled through aggressive breathing, finally bringing his fingers down to attack her clit; her legs practically went numb, the steady throb of his thick cock a near lethal combination as his teeth dug in at the base of her neck. "You're gonna come for me again, baby; you're gonna come and I'm going to pump you full of mine, got it?"

She nodded rapidly; good god did she crave that feeling, mere days since their first tryst and she was starved for it again. His fingertips formed a pinch around her clit, and as he pressed on it guaranteed her orgasm. "Oh god, fuck, Negan I'm gonna come!" She gasped, hands raking the table as her nails couldn't dig in.

"Do it, babygirl, come on this thick cock--" he roared and dropped his body over hers as he felt her let go, her inner walls squeezing so tight yet so slippery as his body grew more erratic, drowning in the sounds he tore from her, every inch of skin he could touch; he felt himself begin to unravel, stuffing himself as deep as he could, a fresh flood of his seed gushing into every nook inside her, seeping out around his base. "Goddamn, Delle..." he let his head drop across her shoulder, both a gasping, melted mess, so entwined in the other they might've never come undone, were it not for their location.

"N-Negan..." she murmured quietly, hand twisting to cradle his cheek.

"Yeah, babygirl?"

"You're fuckin' heavy -- please get off," he grinned and pulled himself back and out of her warmth, one hand steadying her ass so he could marvel at his release bubbling from her hole. He gave one more squeeze before he redressed her legs, turning her to sit once more. "You gonna do that every time you get jealous?"

He snorted as he was pulling her top back into place. "Only when you need a reminder," their
mouhts met in a soft kiss, her body pleading for a little aid in coming down. He was gentle as he let her arms envelope her, nestling his nose against her hair. "Was it too much?"

She smirked into his chest, breathing in a musky aroma of sweat, sex, cotton and soap. "I should be makin' you jealous more often."

His body relaxed a little, a kiss landing on top of her head. "And I'll just keep reminding you that every inch of you is 100% fuckin' mine," he withdrew to rescue his jacket from the floor, scooping up Lucille into his grasp again; had she been any closer it might as well have been a threesome. "Until I get it through that skull."

She dodged his poking finger then, slipping towards the door on jellied legs, a gooey but satisfying squelch between them. 'Maybe Carson has spermacide...' "You'll have to try pretty hard," she chirped, stepping into the hall as as he followed. "So, was Jadis everything you hoped she'd be?"

He'd nearly forgotten about the strange garbage woman from earlier in the day; it seemed forever ago now. It had proved a truly productive mission all the same. "And more, sweetheart," he chuckled. "Alexandria has some big ass plan to take us all down and kill me; but with Jadis' numbers on our side, we'll wipe out those fucks in a snap." He did the same with his fingers for effect.

"That many, huh? Suddenly I'm feelin' all secure." They'd reached the stairwell, Negan ready to begin the climb to his - or as he thought of it, their - bedroom, when she began to descend.

"Where ya goin', beautiful?" He seemed honestly perplexed.

"Negan," she gave him a skeptical face. "It's best if I stay in my old room, at least while Simon is here. I managed that split pretty painlessly, but if he thinks we're fucking..." her mind went to how heartbreaking it'd be for Simon; Negan's mind went to how dangerous he could be when set off.

"Good thinkin'," he pulled at her wrist, her body coming flush to his as he kissed her; it was a brief but fulfilling kiss, something to send her to sleep satisfied with. "G'night, babygirl."

"Good night, you fucking geezer." She winked and made her way down to the lower floors, happy to curl up in her own bed; but missing his heat beside her all the same.

Negan was in a similar mood, one arm pillowed behind his head as he stared up to the grey ceiling; he was used to having her petite form next to his, tangling his limbs with hers throughout the night. It'd been a long day, one of countless new developments, and he was wishing he could unpack his thoughts with her before falling asleep; but he'd have to wait. 'I've waited this long.' Was his last thought before letting exhaustion take him; it wouldn't be the best slumber of his life, but it would do.

That is, until the alarms started to sound, and hurried fists of guards came banging at his door.

The Sanctuary had an intruder.

Chapter End Notes

Hot damn that was a fun one to write ;) was it fun to read?
Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU! ♡♡♡♡
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

**Before...**

He hadn't been avoiding her; god no. But choosing a time and place for her to verbally, emotionally - and possibly physically - rip him apart was challenging. She was angry, furious, and the girl had a wide blast radius that demanded privacy. The wrong locale could out them both.

He finally settled on the pub; it was the early days of February and the place was still lacking clientele. Folks still holding onto their new year's resolutions. He'd go after hours of course, long since the last patron had left but she was still there, wiping down countertops and polishing spots off of glass. Yes, in this sleepy little bar she'd finally have her due.

The air was strangely frigid that night; it should've been getting warmer, but somehow it felt like the dead of winter on his exposed skin. He was stood in front of the heavy wooden door, the tinted windows showing her general movements inside. *Bite the bullet,*' He told himself, raising his fist. *'Take it like a man.'*

**Bang!Bang!Bang!**

Delle jumped at the sudden, insistent sound, and her blood ran cold. Her mind immediately went to Jordy and his pals on the other side, waiting with strength, maybe even weapons, to finish the job. Slowly, she snuck behind the bar and grabbed the baseball bat that Barnes kept as a means of classic security. There was no way she was answering the door without some protection. Holding it behind her back, she crept up to the locked door and opened it just a crack; only for her emotions to do a one-eighty at who stood there instead. *'I might still need the bat.'*

"Hey, sweetheart," he whispered in that low rolling drawl. "Can I come in?"

She licked her lips and swallowed, brow knitting in his direction. "We're closed - I really shouldn't be lettin' anyone in."

"Please," his voice sounded strained, almost in the midst of heartbreak. "I just want to talk. You said we needed to talk, right?"

'*Fuck. I did say that.*' She sighed, shaking her head and against her better angels opening the door. "Get in out of the cold, you fucking geezer."

He did just that, and couldn't help but eye her in her work wear; she'd not worn fishnets since the attack, instead sheer thigh highs covered her legs, leaving the thinnest line of bare flesh between their tops and the hem of her black skirt. The sweater she wore was high collared but hugged her tight, he could almost make out the straps of her bra underneath. *'Calm down you old pervert,'* his angels reined him in. *'You're not here for that.'*

"Well," she started, settling against the bar as she set the bat on top of it. "Think it's safe to assume you know that I know."
He'd decided days before to play dumb on this part; if he already knew why he was in shit, she might start wondering why. She was still in a raw state, and finding out her new barfly was the wife of her boyfriend would only rub salt in open wounds. "What should I know, babygirl? Y'seem angry, just want to know why."

"Oh I am way past angry," she snapped; off to the races and quick. "I am fucking furious. I know what you did to Jordy, Negan."

He let his eyes go wide; in truth he was scared, this could be his last fight with her. "Oh shit."

"Oh shit indeed!" She threw up her hands, utter disbelief on her face. "You beat the guy into a bloody pulp!"

He ran his hand through his hair, leather stretching around his bicep. "I just... we got in a fight."

"Don't you think for one fucking second you can lie to me like that, fuckwad!" She growled, storming up to him. "I know Fang went and talked to you, convince you to go after those dickbags! Of all the stupid, brainless, neanderthal, things to do --"

"I know. I fucked up somethin' fierce," he at least sounded apologetic, head dipped in shame. "It was childish of me to do it... but the bastard deserved it."

'O my fucking GOD.' "The bastard deserves to be rotting in the fucking ground, but I'm not about to go busting his door down and bashing his brains in," she ran her hands over her face, incredibly frustrated. "What if you'd been caught? Or he comes looking for you!?"

"I didn't get caught," he pointed out, his jaw ticking slightly. "And he won't remember shit from our little scuffle. Dumbass was blind drunk."

"That doesn't make it better! His friends blamed me when they saw how bad you fucked him up!" He winced and pretended to be shocked; even though he'd been killing himself with guilt for weeks. "Fucking David came here while I was working! Do you realize how fucked that is!?"

"I do, I'm sorry," he put his hands up in some form of defense. "I wasn't thinking; I should've planned for those two comin' back."

"Should've planned!?" She bent at her waist, head suddenly heavy in her hands. "You sound psychotic! What, we're you gonna hunt them down one by one? Who are you, Mad Max!?"

"It's not psychotic to want to protect you," he stepped a toe out of line with that remark; and he figured why not a whole foot? "Or to beat the holy hell out of the sick pervs that hurt you."

"Oh is that right? Does your fragile little ego feel better now--"

"--they fucking hurt you! You could've died, when I found you in that alley--" he came to a dead stop as her face went ghost white, eyes wide.

"What do you mean, when you found me?" She said softly, eyes narrowing as if staring at a stranger. "Was... was it you who called the cops?"

He clenched his fists in his gloves, knowing there was no backtracking now. "I...yes."
"Oh god," her hands cupped her mouth, wide in shock; there had always been a level of space, a certain distance kept between the two of them. It’d been for safety and privacy, but Delle had grown accustomed to it; knowing he’d found her, bleeding in a pathetic heap that night, totally obliterated that space. Suddenly she felt more naked than she ever had with him, and it felt strangely wrong. "Fuck, fuck!"

"Hey," he stepped in closer, gently reaching for her upper arms. "It's alright; I'm glad I came along when I did, it keeps me up at night to think of what they could've done unbothered."

As his palms made contact with her arms she felt immediate conflict. Her body wanted to nestle close for safety, love, comfort, while her brain was urging her to ruin in the other direction. None of that, of course, changed the fact that he'd never told her the truth.

"...why... why didn't you tell me?" She breathed, panicked eyes searching his face. "Why sneak around like that?"

"Honestly I was afraid you'd react the way you are right now," he gave a lopsided, wistful smile. "I didn't want you to feel all exposed with me. Let you come to me when you were ready."

Her heart swelled in warmth at that, lashes fluttering involuntarily. 'Fuck he's smooth.'

"You should've said something," she scolded, but didn't move from his grasp; she loved the feel of leather through her shirt. "And you're still not excused for Jordy; sure it's all well and good he's hurting now, but you went behind my back, and against my wishes!"

He grimaced but nodded deeply; he knew that was the real error of that night. Fang had said just the same when he'd tracked him down, that she didn't want to do anything to them; but he couldn't get it through his head to leave it well enough alone. In many ways he was still the boorish young man fighting for his girl; as different as their situation truly was. "I know. I am truly sorry for that, sweetheart; guess my dick was doin' all the thinking there."

"That's still a shit excuse, teach," she sighed, shutting her eyes. "I feel... I feel like I can't trust you right now. I can't have you lying to me and hiding things; I'm a big girl, just tell me shit upfront. Can you do that for me?"

His thoughts immediately flew to his wife, their unknowing camaraderie that currently, only he knew about. Was right then really the right time? Her face certainly seemed to say so; she was demanding total candor, honesty. But would this hurt her more? Worse, would this be the final straw?

"...I'm waiting here. Can you do that for me, Negan?" She was annoyed to ask again and it didn't really inspire trust that she had to.

"Yes," he finally spoke, his expression one of commitment and genuine truth. "I swear, Delle. The truth, nothin' less for you, babygirl." He slicked his gloves from his hands to press bare skin to her cheek, bringing her close. "One hundred percent, from here on out."

She stared up at him, already steeping herself in those warm brown eyes, even as she resisted. I want to trust him; why shouldn't I trust him? Her own hands rose to cradle his face, cheeks dimpling under her fingertips; she hated how good, normal he made her feel, even brimming in anger and frustration. Like her self was finally enough, not over the top or wild. I can just be me, for once; nothing to apologize for.'
"Okay," she muttered, letting her forehead press against his cold leather chest. "I'm still fucking mad, but okay."

He breathed a sigh of relief; but this honesty meant being totally bare with her. He savored the smell of her hair, the bargain shampoo she used, the feel of her skin under her clothes, and the warmth that just radiated off of her. In a matter of minutes it could've been stripped away from him. He wanted to remember every detail. "I love you Delle," his voice rumbled in his chest but there was some sadness to it. "More than I ever would've expected. Don't know how I got so lucky as to you lettin' me in."

She smiled against his body, totally unaware of what was about to leave his lips. "Guess I haven't run out of patience for you yet, Negan."

'You might right now.' He gathered his courage, his love, and all the guilt he'd been feeling for months; he could almost taste the fear in his mouth. "In the interest of total honesty... you need to know somethin'," she pulled back to look into his eyes, now clouded with fresh worry. "And... and what it is might be the tippin' point for us."

"What is it?" There was that strain again, that ache in her heart he so expertly caused.

He swallowed and his arms tightened around her. 'Please don't run away from me.' "I...I knew about David comin' in days ago."

She blinked, confused. "How... how could you have known that?" It seemed fate intended to make him spell it out for her.

'Here goes. Say goodbye to this beautiful, crazy wildfire of a woman. You'll never see her again.' "My... my wife was here with you."

And in a heartbeat, all the cold from outside came rushing into Delle's body and time seemed to stop altogether. Her breathing all but ceased as the horrible realization washed over her; she and Lucille had far more in common than just their hometown. "Y-Your wife is..."

"Lucille," he nodded, hit with all the shame he should've been feeling the second he'd kissed Delle for the first time. The look on her face, the painful shock was imprinted on his brain now, her eyes growing wet with tears. "I am so... so sorry, Delle."

In spite of herself she couldn't let go of him; if anything her hands gripped tighter into his sides, as if some force was on the cusp of stealing him from her. 'He was never mine, he can't really be stolen from me, can he?' A tear dripped down her cheek, normally an embarrassment for her, it couldn't be avoided; how could she not make the connection? And with all Lucille had shared, and -- 'Oh god the fucking baby!'

"I think I'm gonna be sick," she reluctantly tugged away from him, catching her mouth and lurching behind the bar for a bucket. Negan shut his eyes as he heard her retch through sobs; he'd literally turned her stomach. "Oh god... I can't believe this." She wailed from her knees before dragging herself up by the bar.

Their eyes met over the polished wood; she was freely crying now, and he was near tears himself. "I had no idea. I didn't even know she'd been comin' here before she told me about David showin' up."

"So...so what do we do?" He was startled that she didn't immediately tell him to get out, never come back; but he wasn't about to question her there. "Do you...what's the best way to handle this?"
He shrugged, head shaking a little. "Hard to say," he gave her a forlorn, puppy-dog look. "I know you don't want us... public or anything, but... I don't think I can stay with her anymore."

Her head dipped as she came around the side of the bar; she shared the blame in the burning wreckage that was their marriage. If she hadn't set the fire she'd at least fanned the flames. "I can't believe I've done this to her... that we've done this to her..."

"I know," he scooched a little closer, stroking her arm in comfort. "I'm not fuckin' proud of the way I did it, but either way I can't be with her anymore. There's nothin' left there."

She shook her head, ashamed of how good his hand still felt on her arm. "She didn't deserve this..." Delle tried not to start sobbing again as Lucille's husband's arms wrapped around her tight, murmuring his love for her rather than his wife. 'I don't deserve him.'

"We'll figure this out," he whispered, kissing just under her ear. "I swear. I'll fix this."

He promised and he prayed he was telling the truth; but the clock was ticking now.

Doomsday was coming fast.

Faster than either could prepare for.

Chapter End Notes

Oh right, the Before, gotta write about that too :p

These will get thinner, but still there darlings. The initial crash is incoming.

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Whoever she was, her mettle and recklessness rivaled even Delle's; she'd infiltrated the Sanctuary under the guise of night, standing her own against some of the meatier Saviors before ropes and force finally bound her and carted her to the cells.

In another life, Delle might've called her a friend.

But the young woman who laid tied up in the darkest recesses of the compound had come with a mission in mind; one fueled without a doubt by hatred, fury and revenge. There was no denying what her plan had been the moment she set foot within bounds, as unlikely it's accomplishment; kill Negan.

That seemed to be everyone's plan lately, if Jadis and the Scavengers were to be believed. The good folks at Alexandria were trying to drum up a militia, a force greater than themselves to overthrow the Sanctuary; but they were trying to do it in secret, which Negan considered something of an insult.

"They could at least own it," he muttered to Delle. "If they want to kill me they could have the fuckin' courtesy to stab me in the chest than in the back."

"Or they could just not stab you at all," she replied, running a hand through his hair. "That'd probably be the preferred route."

"Yeah, but Rick's got an idea in his head now," Negan sighed, his eyes finding the ceiling. "He's not gonna let this go, stubborn little prick that he is."

"I know," she sighed, rocking her hips. "He's a thorn in our sides, obviously. Maybe restructuring is in order?" She breathed deep as Negan's hands steadied her waist; he apparently thought more clearly when he was inside her.

He let his pelvis buck to hers, snug inside her wet warmth. "Seems to be the only option now," her hands rested on his shoulder and knee, her legs bent and sturdy on his sofa. "And ol' Rick Grimes isn't gonna be happy til he's dead in a ditch."

She moaned softly, quiet enough that it was just for his ears. "The heart wants what it wants," she wriggled her hips and earned a smack against her rear. "What about the little hitman downstairs?"

"Oh I am keepin' her," he began to thrust in earnest; 20 minutes worth of slow, agonizing riding was beginning to wear him down, and he wanted to come with a bang. "Badass little lady rolls in here on a one woman goal to kill me? That's somebody to keep around," he leaned forward and bit at her throat, his fingers digging into her flesh to bring her down on him over and over. "You two would be thick as thieves I bet."

"Ah-- yeah, regular slumber party pals," she smirked and let her back arch; she didn't mind him using her to get to his release. It got her to hers just as quickly. His nails were starting to dig in, breath growing hot against her neck. "How about we wrap this up and go have a chat with her?"
"Gladly!" He laughed, his thumb immediately shooting down to draw heavy circles around her clit. It was the last bit of excitement she needed to push her over the precipice, climax hitting and strangling his cock inside her. Overcome with the pressure of her heat, the animal groans in her mouth, her hands in her hair, he lost his all important control; his manhood spasmed deep within her, painting her insides white with his release. "F-fuck... sorry."

She scowled at his sheepish smirk, but didn't deny him a kiss. "Good god when did you get such a hair trigger?" She teased, pinching at his cheek. "What happened to 'pull out and pray'?"

"You're the one who feels so good; and you were squeezin' me so tight my dick would've snapped off if I tried to pull away," he chuckled and helped her off her perch, his length slick with their combination. "It was a matter of personal safety, sweetheart."

"Your excuses are shit," she kissed his hair before sliding up her cargo fatigues and tugging on a tshirt; black, outside of her usual wear. As he was tucking himself back into his pants and redoing his belt, her palm caught his cheek, a serious, killer glare in her eyes. "If you get me pregnant, I swear to God I'll fucking kill you."

He scoffed and bit at her thumb. "Please, I'd be Father of the Year," he stood and grinned down at her defiant face. "And you'd make a fine fuckin' mamma bear," her eyes flickered with honest anxiety; the world they lived in wasn't ideal for child rearing, and the threat of Alexandria wasn't helping. "Hey, it's alright. I'm sure you're fine, baby."

"Guh... don't say baby," she groaned with a roll of her eyes, making for his door. "Let's go meet the infiltrator."

Negan sighed, strapping his knife to his belt, taking up Lucille and resting her on his shoulder. 'She'll come around eventually.' "Right behind ya, beautiful." She let him lead the way down to the basement level as he pictured her belly round and baby-filled, wandering down to the cell the little spy currently called home; only to find the door already open, and both of them caught the sound of bone meeting bone.

"...fighting's just gonna make it last longer...which for the record, is fine by me..."

'Fucking Davey.'

Negan turned to see Delle's face become a righteous storm, her eyes screaming 'I told you so' at him; and she was right. Negan shook his head and strolled up to the open doorway, Lucille meeting the doorframe in a deafening thud.

"David!" He drawled as Davey snapped to his feet; stuck with his hand in the proverbial cookie jar and in a world of trouble. The young potential victim glared from the floor, shirt torn at the collar. "What the hell are you doin' in here?" 'Like I don't already know."

"What the hell are you doin' in here?" 'Like I don't already know.'

"Do you really think I need you to answer that?" He shook his head slightly; that soft grin never leaving his lips. He meant business. "You were trying to rape this woman, weren't you? This is some unacceptable behavior. Rape is against the rules here," Davey could make out Delle's cold eyes past Negan's shoulder, and in the pit of his soul he knew he wasn't leaving that cell alive. "I wouldn't wanna be somewhere where it wasn't. Someone in charge who let something like that fly..." he shook his head and huffed; Davey would be no great loss. "David. You really crossed a line here."
In a way, Negan's behavior warmed Delle's heart; knowing that a part of the same man who'd saved her from a similar fate years before was still in there only confirmed her feelings. She was almost completely immersed in him now. 'That's the Negan I loved...'

He silenced Davey's pleading and prostration with the swift slide of his knife through his throat. 'And there's the new guy.'

"Y'know what, Davey?" He purred in that all too smug, confident twang. "I do not accept your apology." Davey's body fell in a very dead heap when the knife dislodged, the young prisoner shifting away; the dead weren't to be trusted.

Delle took the opportunity to step in, shoving her comrade's corpse to the side with her boot. "Hi," she smiled at the young woman, letting her head rock to one side. "Lookin' a little worse for wear there, huh?" The prisoner said nothing, merely remained curled up tight. "What's your name?"

This drew her gaze up, dark, focused eyes meeting her own. "Sasha."

"That is a beautiful name," Negan added, letting Lucille hang at his hip. "I'm sure you know who I am; but this here is Delle."

"I know who you are." Sasha's eyes didn't leave the young she-wolf, who raised her brows; she wasn't aware she'd gained that much notoriety.

"Look at you, makin' a name for yourself," Negan chuckled as he crouched to Sasha's level, reaching behind her to undo her binds. "Sorry you had to see that; and about the rope, too - but you did cause one hell of a fracas last night."

Sasha used her freedom to scramble into the corner of the tiny room, the light from the hallway illuminating her face; and then it clicked. "Oh shit; I remember her..." Delle breathed, crossing her arms and looking to Negan. "She was there; in the woods."

"Oh..." he stomped his boot and clicked his tongue twice; one for every skull he'd crushed. "Oh, hell. I get it now. I got to hand it to you, you've got some beach-ball-sized lady nuts on you, coming in all kamikaze like that," Delle smirked; if there was one thing Negan liked, it was a big entrance.

"Big question here, and I need the truth on this one -- Did Rick put you up to this?"

"Rick?" Sasha hissed, a deep malice in her tone. "Your bitch? No."

Indeed, what Sasha had pulled seemed far too upfront for Rick; he clearly believed in community, Sasha in sacrifice. "Well; you must've thought it was the end, comin' in on your lonesome like that," Delle purred. "But it really doesn't have to be that way. Quite the opposite."

Negan tossed his precious hunting knife to the ground, steel clattering. "This knife is yours now," he explained, reeling off the choices ahead of her. "You can try to use it, take us out, but Delle's pretty spry, and considering I am standing above you, holding a baseball bat, that doesn't seem real smart," he tapped Lucille for effect, bit in truth would quickly crush the captive if she'd gone for Delle. Thankfully, she didn't. "Now, you can use it to slit your wrists, which would be a damn shame, but I get it. You're obviously not on the shiny side of the street, given recent events. Now, you can sit there and do nothin', wait for ol' David to come back to life and eat your face, also a damn shame and kinda nuts, but, hell, to each their own," none of the choices he'd presented so far had been particularly appealing; but they weren't supposed to be. The illusion of choice was a favored tool in
his kit. "Or you can use that blade and stop ol' Rapey Davey from becoming Dead-Alive Rapey Davey, save yourself, join the cause."

She just stared up with that defiance she'd no doubt held onto since her youth. "There is a right choice here, Sasha," Delle chimed in. "You just have to make it."

"Why?" She asked, distrustful.

He shrugged. "I'm a man short--"

"That piece of shit was never a man." Delle cut in, real hatred coating her tone; she'd never been a fan of Davids in general.

"--but still, I'm short, and you got those beach-ball-sized lady nuts, and I wanna harness the heat comin' off of 'em," He continued, unfazed by her quip. "You and Delle strike me as cut from the same cloth. Couple o' girls who've been fightin' for longer than they've had to, who don't really know how to stop," he swung his arm around Delle's shoulder, letting his cheek lean onto her head. "But Delle learned; she figured out how to rein in all her fire. She picks and chooses when to burn now. And you can too," he pointed down with Lucille. "All of us together, workin' on the same side of things."

"I know it's hard to picture, considering all he's done," Delle offered. "But Sasha - we all have shit to get over. Take a little time, think about it," she gave her the warmest smile she could muster. "Whatever you decide, so shall it be."

"And, again, I am sorry you had to see that," Negan threw her an apologetic look as Lucille dipped in Davey's direction. "Even though I know you have seen some things. I just want you to understand we are not monsters." With that, their meeting was over; they'd leave her be, see what she decided on by the next morning. There was much to prepare for, whatever she chose.

The lieutenants snapped to it as soon as they'd been given the story; by the time Delle and Negan reached the meeting room, the council had already gathered and was waiting for his order. Delle was more than a little surprised to see Eugene there; though he'd been proving himself very loyal so far. Dwight had crawled out of his cave to join the meeting, and Simon, of course, sat to the right of Negan's spot, stewing and nursing his emotional wounds. 'Fuck, is there anybody in here who doesn't have it out for me?'

"So," he barked, sliding in at the head of the table, Delle taking his left. "Those uppity brats in Alexandria have been hard at work right under our goddamn noses!" Jadis had supplied a wealth of information in her broken speech the day before, and as useful as the intel was, it left Negan furious. "They went and scrounged up every last gun in this great state, been in talks with every fuckin' community we know of, and are even lookin' at explosives to send our asses to kingdom come," he chuckled and shook his head. "I'd be impressed if I weren't pissed the fuck off."

"What's the plan, then?" Simon prompted; he didn't like the way Delle had trailed in after Negan, but he didn't like Alexandria more. "We finally puttin' an end to those assholes?"

Negan gave Simon a long hard look. "No need for extremes, Simon," it was nearly a growl, just civil enough for the company they were in. "They are still a resource, and we do not waste resources in this world. We make a point," Lucille smacked the table for punctuation. "And they get it through their heads this time."
Simon lowered his head in submission; he wasn't pushing his already rotten luck.

"Now then!" Negan raised his voice, bending every ear in the room. "We're gonna get ourselves in ship damn shape; want twenty of our best people ready to go at a moment's notice. These fucks are goin' to learn what happens when you go runnin' around behind the boss's back."

"If they don't learn?" Dwight rasped from the left, down a few seats. Delle was startled to hear his voice.

"Then we go with plan B," Negan shrugged, a smirk on his lips. "Their top guys will have to die; and when they do, we'll institute some folks of our own selection to run that shit show."

Dwight nodded, his face an unreadable stone. "Right." His tone put a strange unease in Delle's stomach.

"We settle on a decent deal with the Scavengers?" Delle had been wanting to ask, but she always found herself somewhat... preoccupied.

"Fine enough," he grinned her way with a wink and she saw Simon prickle. "They'll keep up correspondence with us, let us know if somethin' changes in Alexandria's plan; but they seem pretty sure of themselves," he scoffed. "Don't even realize the shit storm they bought themselves into."

"What do we do with the other communities?" Gavin asked; thankfully they were all back from outposts, no calling required. "The ones they were talking to."

"They'll be dealt with," he decreed. "But we need to handle Alexandria first. Get those punks sorted out, then we can dish out the appropriate punishments for their cohorts."

Arat and Gary were the first to leave, selecting which weaponry to bring on the upcoming field trip; Simon and Gavin next, both intent on dealing with their outpost teams, prepping them for newer territory. Dwight was the last to leave; he stated he'd be checking the routes to Alexandria, making certain they hadn't set up any bombs or booby traps along the way.

But ultimately, his goal was to reach Alexandria itself.

He knew they wouldn't welcome him; but maybe he could get them to listen. His rage had grown too great, and he couldn't live in complacency anymore.

Negan and Delle had to go.

In the meantime, curiosity got the best of Delle, and she found herself drawn into the basement again, seeking out Sasha; it was true she'd been an asset if she turned coat, but the woman was strong, relentless and stubborn. All subjects Delle herself was particularly skilled in. She could hear a familiar twang of a deep voice as she neared the cell, clearly conversing with the young woman.

'Sasha sure is popular today.'

"'Geney!" She almost sang the name, Eugene nearly hitting the roof as he jumped. "You two enjoying a nice little reunion? Catching up on days gone by?"

Eugene was much the same man she'd met outside the RV, despite the wardrobe change; sniveling and afraid of everything around every corner, he'd snapped into the cult of Negan almost as soon as he'd set foot in Sanctuary. Even now, a trusted member in Negan's circle, he still seemed terrified of
her. Not that she minded.

"W-was only seein' that my former companion here was equipped with the b-basic comforts and conveniences I could myself provide," he babbled in that deep south accent. "I-I made sure each and every sundry was copacetic with Negan before I made my way down here, I swear."

"I bet you did," Delle shook her head and scoffed; Eugene was the type to save his own skin whenever possible. He wasn't going to go crossing Negan. "You want to buzz off, Geney? Was hoping to have a quick gab with our guest."

Eugene, somehow sweating like a pig, glanced hurriedly between Delle and Sasha. "Yes ma'am," he muttered, before turning to his friend. "P-please say yes, Sasha."

"Quite a guy, your friend there," she marvelled as he plodded away, back to his tinkering. Delle stood in the doorway, studying the young captive. "He's like a chameleon. So quick to change his colors."

Sasha didn't speak, didn't even make eye contact. She just stared forward.

"Alright, not feelin' talky; maybe you're feelin' listeny," she sighed and ruffled her own hair, ponytail growing messier. "You're clearly a right motherfucking badass. Anyone can see that; I mean you're smaller than me and you came in here, suicide mission and fists swingin'. You were ready to die," she knelt to her eye level. "You really shouldn't though - die, that is. You? You could be a diplomat for this place, for your people. Eugene, he's a lost cause; he's Negan through and through. But you..." she nodded, watching the obvious tells on Sasha's face that said she was listening. "You're strong. Some folks are gonna die, regardless; but you can stop that kill count from gettin' any higher."

Finally Sasha's gaze met with hers, steely and confident. "Sorry," she ground out the word from her teeth. "But I'm not interested in advice from Negan's slut."

She'd expected that animosity; and it wasn't as if there wasn't a grain of truth there. "That's fair," she nodded, but steeled her own gaze. "Then take it from someone who's lost people of her own. Pain is unavoidable; but what you decide to do can make it so much less terrible. You stew on that," she glanced to Davey, who was beginning to stir; she wished she'd been the one to kill him, but this was part of the process. "I'll leave you be. Looks like you're about to have your hands full."

She shuttered the cell back into darkness, the dull sounds of hissing protruding from within; a cataclysm was coming, no matter what Sasha decided, and blood would flow.

It was unavoidable.

Chapter End Notes

Let's be honest, these two would fuck like bunnies ;p

What happens next!? We'll find out tomorrow ;)

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YOU! ❤❤❤❤

(But rly say whatever you like you all are the highlight of my days)
Chapter 90

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was a bright morning over the Sanctuary; the sun was casting long, crisp shadows over the convoy of trucks, the Saviors readying for their latest pilgrimage to Alexandria. Simon guided the order of operations, seeing that each man and woman was well armed and prepared to fight if needed. Dwight was doing safety checks on their vehicles, well fueled and in top shape for the trek. Delle grimaced at the chrome and copper polished coffin that sat waiting on one truck's flat bed; knowing the intended occupant.

"Casket's a little morbid, isn't it?" She wondered aloud from the railed catwalk. Negan stood by her side, hand lazily gripping the railing as they surveyed his people in their clockwork efficiency. Side by side, they were both in their nightmarish finery; Negan in his black with Lucille in his gloved hand, Delle in her red with Fang at her back. How tightly they both held to the past.

"Feel like a little pageantry is called for with a drama queen like Rick," he chuckled, that easy, dimpled grin indestructible on his cheeks. "He'll snap into line. Or he'll fall. Plain and simple."

She nodded in answer. "You and Sasha settle on the ones to die?" It was part of the deal; Sasha had put Davey down and made her choice, on the stipulations of who died that day.

"She talked me down to one, actually," he shook his head in disbelief. "That lady could sell salt to the sea."

"Oh so I've got competition now?" She said it softly, playfully, letting a mild smile find her lips. "I know how you love a cat fight."

"That I do," he ran his tongue over his lip, leaning against the rail to stare at her. "But nothin's holdin' a candle to you anymore, babygirl. I'm on you like white on rice."

She smirked, even though a little part of her felt relief. For the first time in her life, he was truly, completely hers. "You're such a sap." She chose instead.

"Sure am, sweetheart," he purred; their eyes met briefly, and he could feel that swell of emotion in her she'd yet been ready to admit. "I love you, Delle."

She wanted to kiss him, hold him; express her own love those ways he thrived on, despite knowing how he wanted to hear it. Still though, her tongue felt numb in her mouth, jaw decidedly set against moving. Was it fear that kept her at an unwilling halt, too scared that admitting her truth again would bring on disaster, as it has before? "I--"

"Boss!" Simon's hollering halted her words, not that she knew what she was going to say. Negan's select team of Saviors stood below him, as well as Eugene and Sasha; both would make the trip that day. "We're about ready to go!"

Negan waved and wondered if he'd shouted in just to pause his time with Delle; but no matter. There was much to do, people to kill; and she'd have time to tell him how she felt later. Finally, they had time again.
During an unexpected roadblock of felled trees, Eugene had volunteered to kick off the proceedings at Alexandria, to attempt to talk them down. The community of rebels had no idea what was coming to them, thinking themselves wise to bring the Scavengers in on their attack strategy; the good could be far too trusting. It bothered Negan that the mullet clad scientist was so keen to try and pal around with his former friends, but if he could get them to fall in line without a fuss, all the better. Saved on bullets, on wood polish.

That's what had Eugene perched atop the flatbed truck, beseeching to Rick on the sheet metal walls, a bullhorn thundering his strange prose. "Compliance and fealty are your only escape. Bottom-lining it -- You may thrive, or you may die. I sincerely wish for the former for everyone's sake. The jig is up and in full effect. Will you comply, Rick?" Delle watched from her seat at Negan's side; sandwiched between him and Dwight. It was more than a little awkward, but the moment was far too suspenseful for her to care.

Alexandria had no idea what they'd got themselves into. They had no idea the group they had sided with were to double cross them, no idea that the explosives they'd hid were totally disabled, no idea who was destined to die that day. But as Eugene proved his fealty to Negan and Rick ducked for an detonation that would never come, a dreadful inkling began to fill their heads; just as the Scavengers' guns met the backs of them.

Oh how fucked they were.

"Showtime," Negan was almost giddy as he grinned to Delle, her own excitement clear on her face. He slid from the passenger side, Delle and Dwight tumbling put behind him as the rest of his Saviors followed his lead. Eugene, crestfallen and heartbroken, bent to Negan's arm, a pat on his back before the tyrant of the Saviors took the spotlight. "You ever hear the one about the stupid little prick named Rick who thought he knew shit but didn't know shit and got everyone he that gave a shit about killed?" He pointed up to Rick, fully at the mercy of Jadis' aim only feet from him. "It's about you."

Delle knew best not to speak up during this particular tirade; this was all him. As much as she'd been hurt by Rick and his people's actions - the very idea that they were trying to kill him made her blood curdle - Negan took it far more personally, and for every living soul at Sanctuary. Their conduct, their plan, was wiping all traces of the Saviors from the planet, regardless of their innocence; and though Delle herself was brewed in sin, many at Sanctuary were just trying to live. And Negan couldn't deal with that a second longer.

Dwight and Simon propped up the casket Sasha called home, presenting it like some holy pillar. It stood beside Negan atop the truck, a makeshift stage that would decided whether that drama was about to become a tragedy. "Sasha's right here, packaged for your convenience, alive and well. Now, I brought her so I wouldn't have to kill all of you, and not killing all of you could get complicated," he truly didn't want to see all of Alexandria die - but that was Rick's choice to make, not his.

"See, I know there's a lot of firepower left in there, Rick. So I'm gonna make this simple. I want all the guns you've managed to scrape up. Yep, I know about those, too. I want every last grain of lemonade you got left. I want a person of your own choosing for Lucille," Delle applauded him silently for that call; it put the deed into Rick's hands, blood on him. "Daryl -- Ooh, I gotta get me my Daryl back! And the pool table and all the pool cues and chalk," 'Always need the cool toys don't you Negan?' "And I want it now or Sasha dies, and then all of you."

It seemed like an easy decision; if it truly meant the livelihood of loved ones, Delle would've made that call in a heartbeat. And yet still, Rick remained silent, stoic, stubborn - and stupid.
"'Y'know what? You suck ass, Rick! You really do. I don't want to have to kill her, but that's exactly what you're gonna make me do!" Negan was at the end of his rope with the moral thorn in his side; maybe the only option for Rick really was death. Submission clearly wasn't a good fit.

"Let me see her." Finally, Rick spoke! And he finally seemed to be bending; waiting til the last second to do so, but bending.

Negan felt a little tension between his shoulders relax, happy to oblige this minor request. "All right-just give me a second. I might have to get her up to speed," he moved to the heavy metal latch that closed the casket, freeing the door. "You can't hear shit inside this thing. Sash'. You're not gonna believe this crap--"

And that's when it all went to hell.

Delle couldn't guess how it happened, or when; but Sasha was dead, walking, and trying to take a bite out of Negan. She heard him shout as the unexpected corpse sent him off the flatbed, out of her sight; the Alexandrians taking the moment to start shooting. 'No,' was the word repeating in her head, her body moving on a will of her own, drawing Fang and racing to where Negan fell, despite the gunfire. 'I will not lose him, not again!'

Sasha nearly had her teeth in Negan's wrist when her movement stopped suddenly; his panic and fury subsiding as red leather and steel stood over him, the curve of Fang's blade plunged into the side of the dead woman's neck. With a grunted roar Delle pulled back hard, almost severing the head but more importantly getting her the hell away from Negan.

"Good timing, sweetheart," he growled as she pulled him up, keeping low amidst the bullets to take brief shelter behind the truck. "Plan B it is!"

"Sure thing, teach," she didn't mean to slip, but she doubted anyone had heard her say it as the Saviors began their invasion of Alexandria. She could see Simon already past the gates, holding his own like she'd never seen before; the Scavengers were beginning to kill or incapacitate the enemy. Maybe they could still do this. The leather clad lovers came through the entrance, Negan heading for his right hand man while Delle searched the edge of the fences; Jadis had Rick atop the watchtower still, but she was on the hunt for something younger.

"Goddamn it!" Carl couldn't believe his rotten luck; face to face again with the confusing she-wolf of the Saviors, and his clip was exhausted. He had his knife, but she wouldn't let him get close enough to stab before that machete in her hand laid him low.

"Ya'll are on my last fuckin' nerve, Carl!" She jeered, holding him at Fang's length, eyes meeting in an unspoken war. "Ya'll thought you were about to overthrow him!? Us!? Sneakin' around making back door deals with God knows who!?" She grabbed him by his collar, disarming him and getting his legs moving. "And here I thought we'd reached an understanding!"

"We can't live like this anymore, Delle!" Carl was begging away as she marched him along, the scales clearly tipping in her favor. "He needs to be stopped."

"I'm sorry I didn't realize being alive was such a goddamn slog for you!" Her sarcasm was out in full force. "We've got a system and you Grimes boys just gotta go and stick your nose up at us! Couldn't just leave well enough alone!"
"You can't be left alone," Carl hissed, wandering by her will down a street strewn with bodies of his friends. "Look at what you do."

"You brought this on yourself and you know it, Carl. It never had to be this way."

There was a gathering by a house; between the overgrown grass and framed by the stark shadows of the perimeter walls the Saviors had collected, Simon waiting for her. Dwight stood beside him, looming and looking somehow even more somber than he had in weeks. "Nice catch, Delle," Simon remarked, his mustache twitching with a smile. "Get him on his knees. Daddy dearest should be along shortly."

This was the moment she'd been hoping to avoid; it was always the alternative if they hadn't complied. Carl would have to die, his father's punishment for all he'd done. As she used Fang's blunt edge to bring Carl to his knees, she tried to avoid his eye; completely dissimilar to Fang's warm browns, there was still something in them that had her conjuring her brother's face in her mind. "This didn't have to happen," she said softly, not totally sure who she was saying it for. "There were better ways to do this."

She stepped to Carl's back as she saw Jadis leading an injured Rick to the clearing and Negan stepped from the adjacent house. This was going to hurt.

"Rick," he shook his head, staring at the leader of Alexandria knelt by his son and bleeding. "This is just gonna make you sad. Broken. You're gonna wish you were dead," he huffed, stretching his back for an impending swing. "I like having fun. I do. But maybe you think that the guy that did what he did to your friends wasn't me, like that was some sort of a put-on, like I'm not the guy with the bat -- I'm just the guy that makes your kid spaghetti!"

He was both - but the version of kindness and friendliness was not present in any way, shape or form. Big bad Negan, a monster in a nightmare, was in full control of the situation.

"This is punishment," Negan got right into Rick's face, making sure every word he said was hitting home. "I'm gonna kill Carl now. I'm gonna make it one nice, hard swing, try to do it in one because I like him. I just want you to put that in your brain and roll it around for a minute," Delle wanted to turn away from the young man's death, but knew better. 'Why's he gotta drag this out?' "I'm gonna kill Carl, and then Lucille here, she's gonna take your hands."

Then Rick looked at him; and it barely felt like the same man. The fear Negan had instilled in him seemed to be gone, and even the one minded, disorganized rebel wasn't there; this was a man with a plan, maybe one he didn't know every detail to yet, but a plan. And it ended with Negan dead and bleeding. "You can do it right in front of me," Rick's twang was vicious but calm; even if he stripped him down to nothing, he'd still come back with a vengeance. "You can take my hands. I told you already -- I'm gonna kill you. All of you. Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow but nothing is gonna change that -- nothing. You're all already dead."

From her vantage point, she could see her lover's face twitch, his eyes changed for the briefest second; and she knew he knew fear. If only for a moment. But then, the big bad wolf persona flew back up, and Lucille was starving.

"Damn," Negan shook his head and stood, walking to Carl's back; Delle stepped a few feet away to allow for a wider stance. "Okay," he took up a batting position. "You said I could do it--"

At one point or another, life side swipes every person in ways they never see coming. Maybe it's
some revelation they never considered, perhaps the appearance of a person who changes their perspective, flips their world on its head; but regardless of its method, life will catch everyone in their most vulnerable moment. It's unavoidable.

And for Delle, that moment came in the form of a literal swipe at the giant paws of a jungle cat.

The whole world fell further into hell as friends of Alexandria suddenly appeared in their hour of need; the would-be knights of the Kingdom, coming in on literal horseback, the farmers-turned-soldiers of the Hilltop infiltrating with them. The scales were skewed now, if not entirely tipped. Negan ran for it, along with Simon, shooting at the enemy with a hastily grabbed gun. "A goddamned tiger!" The beast was bloodied now, hoping from Savior to Savior, an absurdity in an already insane situation. "You taste that Simon!? that is the taste of shit!"

He had no choice; the only option was to fall back, get to the trucks and regroup. He hated the very idea of it, but it meant they might survive to win another day. It was miraculous they got back to one of the massive supply trucks at all, Simon getting it started as Negan finally had a brief moment to survey the situation.

Smoke bombs had been thrown, the Scavengers were running and breaking their deal. Many Saviors laid dead on the ground, some already undead and shuffling after flesh. The few that lived were crawling into the trucks, taking their leaders cue. And Delle--

Wait.

"Where the fuck is Delle!?" He threw Simon a hard, accusatory look as the truck began to roll out; the red leathered little maniac was nowhere to be seen, and when he considered his steps, he couldn't remember anything past the tiger...

'Oh no. The tiger.'

"I... I think she's gone, boss."

She was so cold; colder than she'd ever felt, lying out in the hot sun, as the wide wounds of the tiger's claws hemmoraged blood from her shoulder, her chest. Her eyes were wide open, and she was somewhere between excruciating pain and totally numb shock. 'Who the fuck brings a tiger to a gun fight!?' She coughed, something wet dripping from her mouth. 'Who the fuck does that!?' Smoke started to fill the air; or was that just her vision beginning to blur? Her body wouldn't move, as much as she willed it to; but where could she go? What chance did she have? Her blood was in her field of vision now, seeping into the ground, dying it an almost black red. Good god she was cold.

"N-Negan..." she croaked, her voice sounding smaller and more broken than she'd ever heard it; maybe because she knew he couldn't hear her, that she may never hear or see him again. She wanted to reach out and find his hand, his arms, safety; but she knew he wouldn't be there. He'd run at the attack of the tiger; she would have too if it's claws hadn't been lodged in her body. 'I didn't tell him,' her face grew wet with tears she barely felt. 'Let me tell him, he has to know...' but it seemed as though she wouldn't get the chance. The world was blurry smoke and growing darker. She was so cold. She could barely hear voices fading around her, the world seeming to fall away.

A clouded sea of a cosmos was beginning to fill her vision... and it looked oh so welcoming.

Chapter End Notes
I could end it here...

But I won't.

Thanks for sticking with me this far folks; please, write me, let me know what you think. These comments are my fuel and keep me going day to day, I love you guys ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 91

Negan stood on the same platform that and Delle had shared that very morning. Hell was plastered across his face; the day couldn't have gone any worse. Alexandria would pay. But in his deepest self, the same one who'd fallen for her years ago, he was being reintroduced to heartbreak of the deepest kind. He couldn't let it show, couldn't let anyone know the level and history that he felt with this loss. The little demon he loved so dear, who'd crossed all of the apocalypse only to wind up on his doorstep, in his bed, and back in love was well and truly gone this time. Force of nature though she was, who could possibly survive a tiger's claws?

"Preparations are bein' made." He looked to Simon, as if only just realizing his presence. How was he so calm? Had he not cared for Delle too? Negan resented him for seemingly not caring; and envied him for being immune to his own pains.

Dwight and Eugene stood with them, ready to address the Sanctuary masses; but Negan was curious, firstly; and turned to his resident genius for answers.

"How the hell do you suppose she wound up dead in that box?" That was where the trouble had all started; he'd held all the cards before that surprise entrance, throwing every plan to shit. If not for that wrench in the mix, Delle might've been by his side.

"My, um," Eugene seemed a little frantic in his answer, driving a wedge of distrust between him and Negan. "best possible posit fingers the tarp on said coffin. That sealed up that box good and tight. She ran out of air."

He didn't know who he could trust anymore. His dark eyes bored into Eugene's skull, trying to make his mind up; would he have let - or helped - his former friend die for a chance at killing him? Was Eugene more cunning than clever? 'Delle could've said for sure. She called bullshit from a mile away.'

"Maybe," he finally declared, deciding it wasn't the time for an interrogation. "What uh... D'you know the odds of survivin' being mauled by a tiger?"

Eugene blinked. "While I am not nor do I claim to be a zoologist of any kind, my knowledge of the species would determine they are bad news, through and through," he swallowed and could see the heartbreak in Negan's eyes. "There is a reason they adopted the colloquial term of 'man-eating'."

Something snapped inside him; like the very last piece of the man he'd been had fallen away, into the darkness Delle was no doubt hurtling through, trying to seek her out. He couldn't be that man anymore; Alexandria had done him the worst kind of wrong, and they would face the full brunt of the very worst of him as recompense. He gathered himself - all jagged edges, cruelty and loss sewn together - and moved the platform. The entirety of his Saviors waited below, expecting his orders.

"So...we are goin' to war!" He bellowed; but it didn't sound like him to his own ears.

"Yes sir!" His multitude of troops replied in unison. Rick the Prick Grimes was going to hurt; and then be wiped from the face of the planet.
There wasn't any pain; she was grateful for that. Again, the thick fog that seemed to ferry her through the strange, unearthly constellations held her aloft, feeling as though she was in a deep sleep while being wide awake. A lucid dream made flesh. There was a warmth that carried over her tired flesh, like a rush of water over her sore muscles and bones.

By all accounts, it should've felt heavenly.

But it didn't. All she wanted was to go back.

"Please," she heard her voice begging, though her mouth didn't move. "I'm not finished; I need to go back..."

"Then go," some male voice, one she hadn't heard in years. "So desperate to hurt again... just go."

"She's right," that older female voice, one she could barely recognize, a dream of a memory. "She's not ready... they need each other... they'll keep each other alive..."

"Send me back!" She felt her mouth move this time, her body beginning to tingle with the notion of pain. "I have to get back! Please, please..."

"Go, Delle," was that...? "We'll be waiting when it's time."

"H-how do I do it?" She asked the nothingness that spoke to her in such familiar voices.

"Feel."

And there it was again, the burning ache in her shoulder, the throb of open wounds; yet somehow not as bad as it had been. She shifted slightly; wherever she was, it was soft, comfortable, and she'd wound up on her back in an old tshirt with something metal inhibiting both of her wrists. She went to open her eyes, but decided otherwise when she heard the muffled voices of the decidedly alive.

"What the hell did you save her for!?" That was Rick; that unmistakable southern drawl could be noone else. "Usin' our supplies on that monster; what was goin' through your head!?"

"She could prove a useful bargaining device," that voice... she hadn't heard it in months, but that delicate, deliberate speech gave it away. Ezekiel. "You do not need to take the king to win a game of chess. You must take the queen."

'Seriously? Save it, Shakespeare.,'

"All due respect Ezekiel, but this is no game," a woman's voice, another hailing from the south. "We're lookin' at all out war. We won't be safe until the Saviors are just a memory, and that can't start with keepin' one of their top lieutenants alive."

'Awe, how flattering.,'

"She's more than that," that was Carl, definitely, and her spine went cold. "Her and Negan; I think they're... together."
A silence followed Carl's sudden admission as Delle cussed him out for being a snitch in her head. 'Fucking christ Carl you really went and did it now; you tattle tale little bitch--'

"You're sayin' you saved one of Negan's wives?" That southern woman spoke again, rage and disgust palpable in her voice.

"No, she's not one of those - they were under lock and key. But he treats her different from everybody else. She's not just part of his army, I know it." 'Fuck you and fuck whatever you think you know, Carl Grimes!

"If she's one of his, she really can't be here," a male voice, accented and gruff like a knife scraping pavement spoke up. "She could just be spyin', or feedin' us bullshit like Dwight."

'WHAT!??'

Her cold spine was suddenly heated by her blood boiling; of fucking course Dwight had sold them out. He wasn't about to take down the Sanctuary by himself; he needed new friends who shared his goals. 'Dwight you cowardly fuckin' turn coat I will goddamn gut you.'

"How much spying could she possibly do from a sick bed?" This voice was familiar, male, smooth and calm. "And how could she relay it if she did? She's injured; its a miracle she didn't die."

"You speak true, priest," Ezekiel and his stage worthy dialect popped up. "Shiva has ended the lives of far greater men than she. If she still breathes, there must be a purpose to her; and if she is a consort of Negan's, then perhaps she could end this altogether."

"I don't trust Negan to end this war over a woman," Rick again, forever suspicious. Though he was right to be so. "There's too much, too many lives at stake for him to surrender just for his... whatever she is."

"Then let's throw her out!" An angry young woman spat out her words like they were a bitter taste. "She's just taking up space here, space we'll need when her little boyfriend comes looking for her."

"I doubt they even know she's alive," Carl offered; she had to wonder what his motives were for advocating so fiercely. "She got mauled by a tiger, and they left her here; if they don't think she's dead they're nuts."

That was true, and it broke her heart; she didn't blame Negan for running, she would've tried to run too. It was the thought of him, thinking he'd lost her forever all over again, that had her heart twisting in her chest. 'I'll find you, Negan; I'll get back to you.'

"Then what do we do with her?" The southern woman asked; that was the real question of the day. What could be done with Delle Cornish? Did they risk keeping Negan's pride and joy alive only to have her turn on them, send her out to fend for herself, wounds and all?

"I think she could end this," Carl spoke confidently. "She's his, yeah, but she's not the monster that he is. If we can get her on our side, to our way of thinking, I honestly think she could convince Negan to--"

"Carl that's enough," Rick cut in, silencing his son. "We're not lookin' for some truce or any kind of treaty; anyone who stands with Negan has to die."
"Guess that's it for me then."

"How many of our own will we lose that way, Dad? The Saviors will go down fighting and take as many of us with them as they can. If there's a shot she could stop all of it, we need to take it," Carl, bless his bleeding heart. "She's not that bad a person."

Again, a silence. Rick had a lot to consider, the young she-wolf at Negan's beck and call laid up in the sick room right next door. She was dangerous - he knew that much - but in the time he'd known her, all of her interactions, she herself had never hurt one of his people. She was defensive, not offensive; but like the wolf she was likened to, she was fiercely loyal. Negan was her Savior; but was he more than that? And could that play to their advantage?

"...she can stay," his thick drawl finally declared, a cool relaxation washing over her body. "At least until she heals. We'll see what she can tell us about Negan."

'I've got plenty to say, but I'm not sayin' it to you, prick.'

"She's gonna get us killed," a woman protested. "If they find out we're keeping her prisoner--"

"We're not," Rick countered; among friends it was easy for Delle to hear why he'd found himself as leader. He commanded a room, much like Negan, but by different tactics. "We're keepin' her alive. Carl might be right; keepin' her safe might keep us safe."

She heard the stomp of boots leaving the next room; clearly she'd split the vote.

"Hope you know what you're doin', Rick," that southern, feminine voice warned. "Negan dies at the end of this. Regardless of what she does."

Delle's heart skipped a beat; she couldn't let that happen. He was everything to her, and even hearing their idle threats made her sick to her stomach. 'I'll not let him die.'

"Nothin's fuckin' with that. The Sanctuary falls, and Negan dies." Rick replied.

'Over my dead body.' Delle swore to herself.

She heard further sounds of boots, this time growing closer, and the sound of an opening door. "I still don't like her in here with Michonne and Rosita," Rick had a bone to pick with every inch of her being. "She should be down in the cell; if she gets loose--"

"She's cuffed to the bed, dad; can barely use her right arm," Why was Carl being so kind? It set her teeth on edge. "She's not getting free unless someone frees her."

'And that's definitely out of the question.'

"Carl's right. She's incapacitated here; the least we can do is allow her to heal, see if we can find out what her relationship with Negan is," that soft, priestly voice spoke. "If her living can save more lives, we should let her do so."

"Well isn't that sweet," her voice startled all of them, including herself; it sounded like the creak of an unused door, wind whistling through bullet holes. Her eyes, dry, opened slow, taking in the enemies who stood there; Rick and Carl of course, that priest, Gabriel and that ridiculous king Ezekiel. A thin
woman with short hair, who Delle was certain had been present that night in the woods, was sizing her up with unguessable eyes. And fucking Daryl, with a glare so mean it might've killed her otherwise. "Keep me breathin' so you can use me to put Negan's head on a pike? Ya'll are just a bunch of *saints*!"

The leaders of Alexandria, Hilltop and the Kingdom stared at her with mixing emotions; some beheld her like a caged wolf, others with the disbelief that anyone would be willingly involved with Negan. Carl gave her a pleading stare; her mouth was gonna get her killed.

"You're Delle," Rick growled, stepping a little closer to her bedside. Out of instinct he reached for his revolver. "His 'little maniac', right?"

"So I'm told," she quipped. She tried to shift up on the mattress, only to hiss as intolerable pains shot through her shoulder and arm; she glanced to see her wounds beginning to scab, yet still wide. *How long was I out for?* "'Y'know Carl, if you missed my cookin' that much you could've just asked me over for dinner."

"Shut up," Daryl, it seemed, had shed any of the conditioning that Dwight had inflicted. "You don't go makin' jokes. Could throw you over the walls at any time."

"Story of my life, Daryl," she replied, catching eyes with the unknown woman. "Don't think we've been properly introduced."

The woman's stare spoke of loss; she'd had to let go of all her loved ones up to this point to stay alive, survive. Delle recognized it from her own reflection. "Maggie." She said curtly.

"Great, everybody knows everybody," Delle was parched, exhausted and in pain; but she couldn't let that bleed through. "Now if I'm not mistaken, ya'll got some questions for me."

"Carl," Rick was giving a command. "Take everyone downstairs. I'm gonna talk to this one."

"Dad, I--"

"Now, Carl." Reluctantly, the other spectators filtered out of the sick room, the other two patients - Michonne and Rosita, apparently - seemed to be fast asleep.

"Damn, Rick, look at you all authoritative and bossy," she smirked as he pulled up a chair to her side. "If Negan could see you now. Want me to call you daddy?"

"Don't run your mouth with me, Delle," his expression was dark on his bright features. "You won't like where it gets you."

"Can't say I like where it's got me now," she sighed, her eyes meeting Rick's. He was in his usual, no-nonsense mood, and her own attitude was beginning to tire her out. "Go ahead, Ricky baby. Ask me what you want to ask."

He crossed his arms, taking her in; she was young, way too young for Negan. Pretty, but the end had marred her just like it had everyone else. How had this tiny young woman be Negan's... whatever-she-was? And moreover, could he win her to their cause? He took a deep breath. "What's Negan's next move?"

She smiled, shaking her head as much as she could without reopening her wounds. "SOMETHIN'
awful, no doubt," she chuckled, falling into a wince of pain. "You got him hoppin' mad now... but I couldn't tell you what it is."

"Why keep you around then, huh?" He asked, brows furrowing.

"I don't know, Rick; you tell me. You could kill me; Negan hasn't come back lookin' for me so he probably thinks I'm dead anyway. He'll bring down hell on earth on you for that," she knew he would. He wasn't there, and that meant new Negan was running the show. "You could kick me out of here, let me fend for myself, get bit, Negan still brings the pain," she found his eye again. "Or there's the miniscule chance that you let me live, heal; and use that as an incentive to call Negan off. Or at least calm him down. So Rick," her turn now. "Why are you keepin' me around?"

Chapter End Notes


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"Negan please, don't--" Lucille was begging with red rimmed eyes, tears painting her face while she watched her husband gather his bare necessities - a few clothes, toiletries, the odd keepsake - and threw them into a duffel bag. He was leaving and she had no idea why.

"Lucille, stop," he found he couldn't look at her; as much as this was the only decent thing left for him to do, he was ashamed it'd taken him so long. "It's better this way."

"I-I don't understand," she whimpered, her hands clutching at her chest, as if trying to hold together her breaking heart. "D-did I... did I do something..."

"No," 'You did nothing at all.' At first that had been what drove him to Delle, that human, physical need Lucille had stopped supplying; but he'd fucked up, fallen in love, and he couldn't live in the shadows anymore. "I just... I can't do this anymore."

She caught his arm but he shrugged it off, a hard look finding her face; it barely even looked like the man she married years ago. Had he always had such a meanness in his eyes? "Please, Negan did... did you find out..."

He looked up, bewildered but hopeful she might've cheated on him first. "What could I have found out about?"

She cursed herself for having said anything at all; but he was staring at her now, waiting for her to explain, and even with all the confusion and fear buzzing around them, she still felt the need to be honest with him. "I'm... I lost another baby," she confessed, fresh tears stinging her eyes. "A few months ago... I-I should've told you, is that why you're...?"

The shock hit him hard; but it wasn't unfamiliar. They had been through countless miscarriages together, hed talked her down so many nights as blood had pooled between her legs and tears stained her skin; this wasn't a new occurrence for them.

But Delle changed everything. And he felt doubly horrible that this time, when she needed his love, him, he couldn't offer it. It just didn't burn for her anymore. Sympathy he could manage, but love... that seemed to be off the table.

At the very least, he owed her honesty.

"It's not that, Lu," he sighed, sitting on their bed, the mattress compressing with his weight. "I am so sorry you went through that alone... I'm sorry I didn't notice--"

"I didn't want you to," she whispered, drawing closer, her delicate hands catching in his hair. "I didn't want you to know until... until I was sure I had it... and when I didn't, it was just too painful."
His heart broke for her, but not out of love. Simply of guilt. "I'm sorry," he breathed. "I'm so sorry... but... I'm still leavin'."

"Negan, please," she sobbed, falling to her knees; her whole body was aching. "Please, I should've told you I know that, but don't leave me, god I can't--"

"You deserve better, Lucille," he shook his head in shame. "Better than me... I didn't even realize what was goin' on with you. And after all I did... all I'm doin'..."

In his tone she saw the first glimpse of the truth; the lies he'd been telling, the double life he'd been living while she was away. "N-Negan... what are you talking about?" She asked, but in her heart of hearts she already knew the answer.

He couldn't raise his eyes but felt them growing wet; this was harder than he'd expected. But it wouldn't have been fair if it'd been easy. "I... I cheated on you."

All the ache and heartbreak went numb inside her, freezing cold fear filling her from stem to stern. "How could you?" She cried, finding her feet in a hurry.

"I need to get out of here," he muttered dismissively; how could he tell the wife he'd sworn his love to that he'd fallen head over heels for someone else? He pulled the zipper to his bag closed, heaving it off the bed along with himself. "I'm sorry I did this to you, Lucille."

"Wait!" Her nails dug into his wrist this time, keeping him there. "Can you... was it a one time thing? Just a slip?" Oh god she was wrenching his heart from his chest with every word. "We... we can work this out. It was just a mistake, right?"

He turned to her completely, his soul laid bare in his eyes. Delle... it had started off as a mistake, but his heart was hers before he'd even realized it. "Wasn't just a one time thing, Lu," he still couldn't meet her eyes. "I... I love her."

Her delicate hand met his face in a hard smack, her small palm stinging his stubbled cheek. 'I deserve that, I know I do.' He couldn't bring himself to look at her tears, stare at all the pain he'd caused; he just needed out.

He didn't say another word, nor did she, as he dressed for the night, threw his duffel in his truck, and made for the usual motel. He wouldn't call for Delle this time; that night, he deserved to be alone.

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Delle laid awake in her bed, all too aware of what Negan was doing at the same moment. The revelation at the bar, who Lucille really was, had hit her like a freight train; and she hated herself for not immediately throwing him out, deleting his number and skipping town. No, they were too tightly entangled now, she couldn't pull away even if she wanted to.

But she really didn't want to.

He'd made it clear that night that he'd be leaving Lucille; she had tried shouting him down at that.

"We don't deserve to be happy, together, with what we did to her!" She'd yelled, all the while clutching him close to her body.
"She doesn't deserve to be stuck with a man who doesn't love her anymore," had been his argument for that. "I'm not sayin' we should go shakin' up; but I can't stay with her anymore. It isn't fair."

Delle hadn't been sure if he'd meant unfair to his wife or to himself.

It made her sick to think of poor Lucille, she who life couldn't stop beating down, the woman she'd cursed and questioned in the past for even letting Negan stray in the first place; she was as much a person as she'd ever been, but a name, face and relationship with her made it so much worse. *Why do I have to go ruining things?* She wondered into the dark. *Why couldn't I just leave that stupid crush in high school where it belonged?*

It was no crush anymore, not by any stretch. She felt like a stereotype, the dumb, young girl who'd fallen for the charms of some old dog, but the feeling in her heart was undeniably love. Unhealthy love, sure; but she'd never known a healthy kind, not romantically anyway. As much as she still loved how he felt between her thighs, how his rough voice would send her into orgasmic spasms, she craved his company, his camaraderie, his support...him. That silly school yard crush had turned into full blown love. Maybe it was always destined to do so.

She pressed her palms against her tired eyes, but she knew sleep wouldn't come. He'd picked that night to end things; pack up from the little home he and Lucille had built, then move into their favored motel for awhile. What happened after that she couldn't even begin to guess; would he find somewhere to live there? Would he want to get away from Lucille, the school that knew him too well? Would he ask Delle to come with him -- and more importantly, what would she say? She couldn't just run off with him; what could he expect her to do? Leave Fang in the utterly incompetent hands of their absentee, abusive father? *Not on my own fucking life.* And it wasn't as though she could bring him with her; he was still on the fence about her and Negan, and she wasn't his legal guardian. With how volatile their father was, he'd probably have her charged with kidnapping.

She rolled to her side, flicking open her phone to reread the text messages they'd shared earlier in the day.

4:14 -Tonight's the night. I'm leaving her.-

4:15 -...I don't know what you want me to say here. I still can't fucking believe she's your wife.-

4:17 -You don't got to say anything. Just keepin' my fingers crossed I won't fuck things up again. I can't lie to her anymore.-

4:22 -I get that. But I don't think we deserve to be feeling sorry for ourselves. We did this. We fucked, we ruined things.-

She'd taken awhile with that response; she kept rewriting it, playing with asking him to run away with her or tell him never to speak to her again.

4:24 -I fucked up, sweetheart. You don't have a spouse you were screwing around on.-

She didn't know what to say there, either.
4:27 -I got to get home. Let you know when it's done. I love you Delle.-

4:28 -I love you too; but don't tell me when it's done. I can't even think about that.-

She closed her device, glancing at the time; 10:24. By now it would be over with; she'd be sobbing in a house that suddenly felt too large, too empty. She'd have questions, ones she might never know the answers to. Negan would be at their cheap motel, likely sprawled on whichever bed of whichever room was free, likely with a strong liquor in his hand; and good god she felt herself insane for wanting to be there with him, holding him, soothing the wound where he'd cut his wife loose. Love was a hell of a drug and a soothing salve, even when administered after heartbreak. She shut her eyes again; why did she have to love him?

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Delle had been right about the liquor; though he wasn't on the overly used bed spread, no. Negan was in the smaller than average shower en suite, body curved under the hot spray of water, one hand bracing the cold tile as the other stroked his length in harsh jerks and pulls.

"Fuck," he breathed, eyes shut tight; in his mind's eye was his beautiful Delle, smiling, kissing, moaning, his. Even the thought of her, even following such a painful evening, got him hard as diamond, hot in his grip. "Goddamn it, Delle..." he growled and wished his tongue could taste her slick, teeth could bite her flesh; but this act wasn't about the sheer decadence of sex with her. This particular personal abuse was a means to an end, something to clear his head; and silence his angels who'd been berating him since he'd left his house.

'You cliché motherfucking pervert; fucking your student!'

'Leaving your wife!'

'How's the girl going to feel if this is all a midlife crisis?'

'She's less than half your age you pig!'

'You're scum, utter scum!!'

All those things he was indeed, but he knew he'd never tire of her. She was more than a young fling, she was his; someone seemingly made just for him, as he was for her. He wasn't about to let go for fear that she was anything less, because he knew she wasn't; he called out her name the same way he did when they made love as his throbbing cock unloaded ropes of white come across the shower stall. This was as close as he'd allow himself to satisfaction for the night. As much as he deserved.

The next night, however... he planned on having her there, and God knows he would have her walking funny for a week.

Chapter End Notes

I know this is a pretty massive canon divergence; but it's setting up for the end. Or pre end? Not sure what to call it...
Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU! ♡♡♡♡

Ya'lls words keep me going, really guys, thank you.
Chapter 93

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

It was by no means an easy recovery period for Delle Cornish.

Every morning she'd wake up the same way; hurting, her wounds still healing at a snail's pace, and for a split second she'd be terrified that Negan wasn't beside her. It always took a moment for her to remember it all - the tiger, being held prisoner in Alexandria, and, like clockwork, her conversations with Rick.

He'd decided to let her live for the time being; he didn't trust her for one second, but Carl seemed more than convinced she and Negan were linked, and moreover, that she wasn't as much of a monster as she made herself out to be. He wanted to see if such a person existed within her layers of attitude and curse words, beneath the cornered animal she currently was. Their talks would stretch on, usually meaningless, and more often than not Rick would grow frustrated by her mouth and constant insults and leave her by noon. She didn't much care; the other two patients were on their feet already, and driving him off meant she could be alone. It wasn't really him she wanted to talk to anyway.

Carl had saved her; but why? He'd come across her dying body amidst the smoke, and rather than stab her through the skull and keep her from turning, he chose to keep her alive. Her blood had soaked into their towels, he'd used their antiseptic and bandages to close the gashes; what in him told him that she was worth wasting medical supplies on? All she wanted was to ask, but she never saw him. Only ever Rick.

It was one such morning when that wasn't the case.

She woke to the sound of the usual chair shoving back, a light pressure by her cuffed hand on the mattress. "Mm... mornin' Ricky baby; you want to hear all about my childhood trauma today?" It'd be a new chance to make up some story for him; it was about all the fun she had those days.

"Not my Dad today," her eyes opened to see the teenage Grimes sitting down, a tight smile on his lips, a heel of bread in his hand. "You'll have to make do with me."

"Hey kiddo," she murmured, giving him the once over. He seemed tense; but this might've just been his natural state. "You draw the short straw or somethin'?"

"Dad figured he wasn't getting very far with you," he admitted and she grinned. "Convinced him to let me have a try."

"I'm that bad, huh?" She raised a brow.

"Kind of, yeah," his single eye was sharpened into a concerned glare. "You won't tell him anything. You're getting on his last nerve; he doesn't even think you matter to Negan at this point."

'Fuck you I matter plenty!' She frowned, her brows furrowing in frustration. "What am I supposed to tell you? Anything I say could be used to get him killed."
"I'm... I'm working on that," Carl muttered; he really did seem like he wanted a bloodless end to the war. "But it'd help if I has someone else on my side."

She bit at her lip as she studied the young man; where earlier she'd seen much of herself in him, all anger and fire wrapped up in freckles, now he seemed different. There was a different Cornish he reminded her of now. "Why did you save me, Carl?" She asked, bypassing his own requests. "Been tryin' to figure it out. Give me a hint."

He sighed; of course she'd want to know. "I just... I think you're more than what Negan makes you out to be. You're kind; I've seen it... and I think you have the same effect on him."

The corners of her mouth tugged up a little; neither she or Negan were particularly good people, but she liked to think they brought out the good in each other. "So what, I make you spaghetti once, and now I'm Mother Teresa?"

He gazed at her with a wary look. "You helped me," he said softly. "When I was scared. When you... you told me about your brother," he watched her body stiffen as much as her body would allow in its injuries and restraints. "You didn't have to; but you did. And I didn't have to save you."

"But you did," she mumbled, her mind elsewhere with a different big hearted teenager. "I... I really don't know if I could sway him here, Carl... your dad seems pretty set on collecting his head, and he'll be none too keen to hand that over."

Carl's lips pursed in thought. "If I could convince Dad down to imprisonment... do you think you could do something then?"

Her eyes cast to the ceiling; could she do anything at all? Negan loved her, but he had a massive community, an empire, that he had to concern himself with too. Even if he could step away, back down - not that she thought he ever would - the rest of the Saviors wouldn't do the same. It'd be pandemonium, a frenzied fire fight and lives would be lost on both sides. Could it keep her from losing him, though? She couldn't say.

"I... I can try," she let her bright eyes meet his, as bare and genuine as she'd ever looked at him; he seemed to surprise at that. "Your dad can't kill him, though. I won't be part of his death."

"I'll see what I can do," Carl replied. To her utter shock, he produced a small key from his pocket and unlocked her left wrist, handing her the heel of bread he'd brought with him. "Thought you might want to eat something."

"T-Thanks..." she nodded; the bread was a little stale, rough; but getting to feed herself made it taste surprisingly sweet. Better than she'd had in days.

"So, uh..." a little blush was forming under Carl's freckles. "Hell, I really don't want to ask this. What um... is Negan your...?"

She smirked around a mouthful of bread. "I don't really know what I'd call him," she shrugged with her good shoulder. She ran her thumb over the hard, homemade crust. "We're... together, I guess."

Carl still felt a little sick to hear anyone considering Negan in that light - but he was working on giving people the benefit of the doubt, and that included Delle. "Why him?" He asked boldly; the moment took her to a different time, years ago, where her beloved Fang sat by her bedside as she nursed injuries of a different kind, and asked her the same question. "The wives I kind of get, they
didn't seem ready for all the death out here; but you seem fine with it. With all he did... why be with him?"

"I feel like you've asked me this question before, Carl," she smiled - not a smirk, or a jeer - a genuine smile. "But I don't really have all that satisfying an explanation. He's just..." she stared into that earnest, peace-seeking face. "He's like my family."

Carl gave her a perplexed look before following it up with shock and disgust. "Oh god he really is your dad! Oh my god that's so gross--"

"Would you calm down!? He's not my fucking dad!" She spoke a little louder than she'd meant to, which seemed to summon the loud stomp of boots up to the sick bay. Rick hadn't been far away.

"You watch your tone with my son!" He glared down at her, tall and angry over her tiny, wounded form; his eyes blurring with rage when he saw one freed wrist. "Carl don't tell me you were goin' to let her out!"

"She's a person, Dad, she deserves to be able to feed herself," he could see Delle closing off again, her body growing tense with every second of his father's presence. He needed to fix that. "We were just talking. I got some info wrong, that's all.

"This isn't about who has the upper hand, Dad," Carl loved his father, but he could be thick as mud sometimes. "We're just talking. I'm getting to know her," he turned back to Delle, her bright eyes shying and defensive. "Delle, how 'bout... how 'bout you tell my Dad what you told me?"

She kept quiet, her eyes flicking back up to Rick and his furious expression; he was mad at her for even breathing.

"Please, Delle?" He was nearly begging now, grasping her wrist; but gently, supportively. It was just enough to loosen her lips.

"Negan..." she didn't lose eye contact with Rick, unblinking and proud. "He's like my family. I know that won't make sense to you, but that's who he is to me," her face darkened, cheek twitching in anger, frustration. "I'd really appreciate it if you didn't kill my family."

Rick was taken aback by this sudden honesty; it seemed real, raw and pleading. Whatever Delle was, there was a clear relationship with Negan there now. But he couldn't let go of what he'd done. Of all he had to pay for.

"Negan dies," Rick said decisively, Delle taking in a sharp breath that felt like knives in her throat. "I'm sorry he convinced you that you need him or whatever, but he's got to atone for all the lives he's destroyed. That's the only way this ends."

Delle felt cheated; lied to. Her stare was cold again, going back to Carl. "Working on it, huh?" She pushed herself up as far as her healthy arm would allow, training her confident gaze on Rick. "I was askin' nicely, but now I'm tellin' you; don't fuckin' cross Negan. Maybe you fight, but you won't win. And you'll lose so many people in the process," this was as close as Rick would get to advice from the other side; she hoped he was listening. "You attack him, you're effectively cutting your population in half. Don't do this."
He had no choice at that point; his people, the other communities, they wanted blood. He wanted blood. Payment for his people, his loved ones, his family. Why should she keep hers?

"No one else needs to die for him," he tried to make it sound like a compromise; she only took it as an insult. The Saviors functioned as a unit. His precious spy Dwight had killed his people too; would he be spared? Would she? "But Negan's life is forfeit. I'm..." he almost apologized; but he couldn't. He couldn't be sorry about the plan for his demise.

She could only stare back, as much as she wished she could tear him apart. "It's your fuckin' funeral," she hissed, turning her head from both Grimes men. "Don't say I didn't warn you."

The leader of Alexandria was running out of patience with the she-wolf of the Sanctuary. "Remind me why we're keepin' you alive." It was an order, not a question. He and Negan had more in common than he realized.

She rolled her eyes, the movement inviting an oncoming headache. "We seem to think there's a chance I can talk him down; somehow my siren's song is gonna convince him up the fucking gallows for you," she wished she could cross her arms. "And maybe I'm fun for the kids."

He didn't say anything more; simply gave Carl a stern look before striding out of the room. There was still war to prepare for.

"Your dad is gonna get everybody killed," she muttered to his son, the boy's fists clenched in his lap. "And he'll still call it Negan's fault."

Carl didn't speak; Delle and his father seemed to share the same stubborn streak, and it didn't look good on either of them. He'd still try and convince his father of time driven punishment, but he craved death at this point; he'd long since forgotten about the laws he'd held true to.

"I'm sure you've got other things to do today, kid," she mumbled, crunching the last crumbs of bread into her mouth. "You go ahead. I'll be peachy right here." She held out her wrist, a surprisingly obedient move on her part, and let him engage the cuff again.

As he stood to leave, he turned and studied her for a moment. "What did you mean, when you said he was family?" He had to know. Just how deep did their relationship go?

She looked up to his expectant face, his curiosity plastered across it. "Sorry, kid. Can't go givin' away all my secrets, can I?"

With that, she was alone again. Alone to think. Alone to miss him.

Things weren't any easier at the Sanctuary.

Negan took a long swig of the hardest whiskey he had - maybe a bit less painful than Delle's experience - but to the best of Negan's knowledge, she wasn't experiencing anything anymore. Like everything else about his old life, like she had been up until months earlier, she was no more than an agonizing memory. As each day passed, the smell of her hair and skin in his bed would fade, as desperate as he was to hang on to it. Whenever he wasn't overseeing the preparations for all out destruction of Alexandria, he'd find himself wandering down to her now unoccupied room, simply
being surrounded by the ghost of her presence. Every night he'd nurse a new hard liquor, something to make him forget just long enough to pass out into dreams of her. To him, the only place she existed now.

"Negan," Eugene was at his door, no doubt there for more planning and strategy; but the moon was overhead now, and Negan was halfway through an unnamed bottle of brown liquid. "Was hopin' I could bend your ear for a quick powwow, discuss the incomparable shit storm that we all are plannin'"

The man had already stepped through Negan's bedroom door, blatant and unrecognizing of social cues; he found Negan splayed on his sofa, one long leg stretched out, the other bent to the floor. "Ya could fuckin' knock, genius," he slurred, raising the bottle to his lips again. "Prefer not to get walked in on if I'm rubbin' one out."

"I will make diligent note of that in future conferences, chief," the portly man replied, shifting awkwardly by the door. "But given that I have already entered your premises, I was vyin' for a little Mano y Mano, one on one to confirm the war plan--"

"You most certainly may not," Negan bit back, pointing at him with a swaying finger. "It is the end of the damn day, I am damn tired and I am done workin' til sun up and I am havin' a damn drink."

Eugene, the spineless urchin that he was, backed down immediately. "M-My realest apologies, sir, any and all thoughts I have can sit back til morning--"

"Grab a glass," the man blinked, Negan casting a hand to the twin seats across from him. Eugene secured himself one of Negan's crystal tumblers, which Negan promptly filled with the same brown liquor as soon as he sat down. "Y'got yourself a lady, Eugene?"

The former Alexandrian - awkward and shy in almost every sense of the terms - shook his head no. "I can't say I've had the opportunity to do much canoodling with the fairer sex since arrivin' in your abode, sir."

"I had one," Negan sniffed, fingers drumming the half empty bottle, his eyes a little wet. "She was a little shit; but damn if that woman wasn't a force to be reckoned with. Ballsy as all get out and a mouth like a sailor. That sweet little spitfire."

"I-I assume it was a favorite wife, who got said fires burnin'?"

"Hell no," somewhere in the back of his mind he wondered how he'd even rationalized the wives, rest their souls. He should've dropped them as soon as Delle's pretty face came into view. 'We would've had so much more time.' "Nah, my heart and soul was my little maniac."

"You... Negan sir you mean to say Delle was in fact your main squeeze? Your ride or die?" Eugene could hardly believe what he was hearing. She'd clearly had a special spot under his wing, but Negan kept his prized possessions under lock and key; Delle seemed like she would buck captivity.

Negan smirked, heart breaking over her name; he'd been so concerned with noone finding out the truth, noone knowing all the love and pain and passion they'd shared for years. It felt petty, even selfish to him; but what did it matter if he shared now? She couldn't be hurt by their history any longer. "That was my lady. My warrior," another deep gulp of his whiskey, tongue loosening even further. "I knew her; before all this. When she was just a girl. I was always so fuckin' selfish with her, couldn't let her go even when I kept ruinin' her life over and over... and now I fucked up beyond
repair. There's no talkin' her back to my arms anymore," his face tightened, staring into the glint of the glass. "There's no talkin' to her at all anymore."

Eugene, for once in his life, didn't have words. Negan didn't allow this kind of vulnerability, ever - and yet here he was, waxing poetic about the firecracker who'd been extinguished at Alexandria. No wonder he was so bent on annihilation.

"I thought to myself, maybe this time," he continued, laughing bitterly. "Now that all the shit and the sick and the mess is out of the way, maybe I could give her what she deserved," he shook his head, drunk and numb. "I was fuckin' delusional. I was the mess. And I pulled her in anyway... got her killed."

"I-I'm certain Miss Delle would be tickled that you are avenging her with such intensity, sir." It seemed like the right thing for Eugene to say.

Negan's face went so dark, so stormy; conjuring images of Rick chopped into pieces, a sobbing pile of shit to match who he was inside. "Avenge her I motherfucking will," he growled, finishing the bottle. "Rick is gonna regret the day he ever even heard my name."

Chapter End Notes

Negan what the fuck you doin, man!?  
Give me your thoughts, your opinions! How am I doin' guys? Tell me!♡♡♡♡

(In personal news Steven Ogg is coming to a convention in my area and I am nOT OKAY)

Leave me a comment! Love yooou
Chapter 94

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Days had turned to weeks; the tiger's gashes were beginning to close, rough and jagged scars becoming permanent marks on Delle's body. And still, she hadn't moved.

It seemed Rick had grown fed up with her; and now others were taking a turn with the young wolf. It made her days cuffed to a sick bed far more Interesting, seeing their different tactics.

Tara and Daryl, neither one of them could be left alone when talking to her; too much chance they'd kill her. Both ran hot; Daryl for what Negan and his men had done to him, Tara because Dwight had apparently killed her girlfriend.

"Don't see what that has to do with me." Delle had dismissed it; and nearly wound up with a fat lip before Carl dragged the young woman from the room.

Daryl made threats; none that differed all that much from Rick's. After weeks of his morality agenda, Daryl offered nothing new. More often than not he too would leave the room frustrated, Delle wondering why Negan had wanted him as a Savior in the first place.

Michonne was Rick's partner, that was blatantly obvious rather quickly. Whenever she came in, Rick was never far away; sometimes just on the other side of the door. She was stoic but logical; wanted Negan dead, just like her boyfriend, but the main goal was peace. Delle found she didn't hate her, and would often tolerate her company the longest. It was with her she let slip the wrong thing.

"Coach has always been headstrong; but he's at his worst when he thinks he's right--"

"Coach?" Michonne had asked, eyes narrowing.

A mix up from the past, Delle backtracked quickly. "Negan. He likes when I call him coach sometimes; makes him feel like he's grooming me for greater things."

Michonne wasn't sure if she believed her; but of course, she shared that tidbit of information with the collective group that had this far met with Delle. They kept a list of anything that seemed pertinent, scrawled in everyone's different handwriting.

-Real attitude problem

-'little maniac'

-thinks Negan loves her

-family

-won't talk if he dies

-likes Carl best
It wasn't alot to go off of yet.

Gabriel irked her to no end; his tireless faith in God only reminded her of how the man upstairs had ignored her very being for years, before deciding all of humanity could go fuck itself. Through some begging, she'd convinced him to lose the starched white collar when they talked. It made him only slightly less creepy.

"You talk of Negan as if he's your family," he said in his soft, lilting, irritating voice. "I can understand a love there; noone wants to lose their family."

"Understatement of the year, Gabe," she rolled her eyes in response. "How 'bout you get on the horn with your precious all-knowing and get him to call of Rick and his stupid fucking militia?"

There was no chance of calling them off, though. From her now singular cuffed spot, she could hear the sounds of preparation outside; people stockpiling guns, practicing attacks, simply discussing the fact they might die. All of them fine with it, all in the service of contributing to Negan's death. 'You've made way too many enemies, teach.' She knew they had to be close to ready, all the people they could possibly round up had joined in, Alexandria, Hilltop and the Kingdom mixing together to become one cohesive unit. Their numbers had grown; but didn't quite dwarf Negan's Saviors just yet.

But Delle still couldn't help the fear in her chest. It had her sick to her stomach.

"Your dad really whipped everybody into shape, huh?" Carl was with her that morning. Her wounds were close to completely healed now; it'd been almost a month now, and soon she would just be a plain old prisoner. "Everybody's all excited, off to kill my boyfriend."

"I think I'm wearing him down," Carl replied, setting down next to her. "He might just keep him in a cell, if he comes quietly..."

Delle snorted; the last thing Negan would do when faced with the colossal fuck-you that was the militia was come quietly. "Your dad's still an idiot. So many unnecessary lives lost over his ego - hell, their egos. They should just duke it out or somethin', last man standing."

"Yeah, doubt that's happening." Carl shook his head; when he looked up at her, he saw an emotion on her face that he didn't think she knew. Worry. She was craning her neck to stare out the window behind her, not that there was much to see. But she was scared. "You alright?"

She didn't speak at first. Merely listened to the veritable army outside, thinking about the men and women leading it; how they'd all been hurt, either by Negan himself or indirectly. They were hunting him, just like she would do anyone who'd hurt him. There was the very real possibility that she'd never see that grinning devil again, never feel his arms around her. 'So what the hell?' "Keep a secret?" She whispered, not actually looking at the young Grimes.
"Sure." He replied in earnest. This was it; he'd cracked the shell.

"I... I've known him a long time," she murmured, her mind finding her memories of his old self, darker hair, a little younger. "Negan. Since before."

Carl hadn't been expecting that; the idea that Negan had even existed before the end of the world seemed impossible. "Seriously?"

"Yeah," Why were her eyes wet? "Me and Negan, we've been hurtin' each other since long before all this. Before the bats and the blades and the undead. Back when I thought I knew what pain was," she sighed and used her free arm to wipe at her nose. "I was just a dumb kid back then... maybe I still am," her eyes met Carl's and he felt as if he'd been punched; her love was unbridled and clear in her stare, her plea. "But I can't lose him again, Carl."

Carl could see the truth in what she was saying; and suddenly it was all making sense. Nobody could possibly love Negan with who he was at the time; but she knew him in a time of mundane normalcy, and that version of him... maybe he'd been worth loving. He must've been, to make Delle plead for his life as she did.

"Let me tell my dad," was his first request, one Delle physically recoiled at. "If he can see Negan as a human being, someone who loved before all this, it might make him more lenient."

She scoffed and rolled her eyes. "I doubt our relationship is the fairytale princess bride shlock that'll get your dad feelin' peaceful. We hurt each other, the people around us when we get together," her mind's eye pictured his wives, both from before and after the end. "Or worse."

"Still," he persisted. "My Dad only knows Negan as who he is now. If he could come to see the man he was then--"

"The man he was then was a teacher who cheated on his wife for a year with his ex student," she blurted out, shutting him up. "Me being said slutty student."

Carl shouldn't have been surprised; but he was. "Holy shit."

"Yeah," very few people had ever known the truth of her and Negan and that fateful year; most who had were long dead. "We were never very good people...but he was good to me."

It was a stretch -- could the love of one person be enough for Rick to let Negan live? Carl couldn't say for sure; the next few days - the army now ready for attack - would tell. He hoped so; he hoped they could find some kind of peace.

"I'll do what I can, Delle," he gave a quick jerk of his head; he was so similar to her Fang in that moment she could've closed her eyes and imagined him in his place. "But for now you should really eat somethin'." Carl produced the usual wedge of bread the Alexandrians deigned fitting enough for her daily meal.

She took one look at it, turned to her side, and vomited stomach acid onto the floor next to her.

"Oh shit!" Carl jumped up, the vomit-inducing crust landing on the mattress. "I-I'll get some towels." For being raised amidst the rotting death, he'd never been that much for puke.
She panted and gagged on the sour taste in her mouth, down her throat as Carl ran off; staring accusingly at the offending morsel of food. She'd been looking forward to eating; the bread and a little water was all she'd had in the month since the tiger's attack, and despite how stale and hard it would always come, at least it was something to fill her belly.

'Probably caught a fucking flu, laid up in this makeshift hobnob hospice all live long,' she thought to herself, wiping her mouth against her wrist. 'That's what I get, spending a month in this hellhole--'

Wait. Had it really been a whole month?

How long had it been since--

'Oh god, not that. Not on top of everything else.'

Carl returned with a nigh on ancient towel, holding his breath as he cast it over the offending stomach contents, hoping it'd hold down the stink. "Goddamn," he mumbled, glancing over to her face in utter fear. He hadn't seen her skin so devoid of color since he'd found her with half her blood missing. "What's the matter?"

Her free hand clutched at her lower stomach, eyes popped wide and cursing herself, Negan and his goddamn dick. "How... how long have I been here?"

He was a little confused; he figured she was counting the seconds at that point. "Uh... I think it's been twenty-five or twenty-four days. Give or take."

'FUCK!'

She nearly threw up again, but swallowed the urge in favor of fright-driven fury. "Carl..." she started slow, her eyes training on the young man; of course it had to be him, there was no one else she could ask, but it didn't make it less awkward. "How well stocked is your infirmary?"

With a month having passed with the Saviors' tributes, they were doing better than expected. "I-Its alright..." he replied warily.

She gulped. 'I am so fucked.' "Any pregnancy tests?"

The Saviors were close to completely ready. The real war would begin in days, and blood would run through the Virginian soil. It was exactly what new Negan wanted; he wanted the ground as red as her leathers, the sky as black as her hair. He wanted to live in her, now that the option of living with her was out of the question.

"We've got the secondary cache movin' to the fourth outpost," He was pouring himself into the war effort, the heartbeat having twisted into a rage he could only sate with strategy. "So that sends the big guns right smack dab between Alexandria and the Kingdom. They'll need it most, take out King Ass-face when he comes swaggerin' by."

"Makes sense to me," Simon was leaned across the council table, maps and ledgers spread between them; the two of them worked well together, in spite of their conflicting emotions. "We've got some decently stocked trucks out at my place; can roll up on Hilltop if they get bratty."
"Good," the warlord in Negan needed Simon's brain, even if he was still resenting him for taking up Delle's time and bedsapce when he had. He still couldn't understand why he'd barely reacted to her death; if anything that irritated him more. "Dwight will keep an eye on the roads leadin' to Alexandria. They try to get out, he'll shut that shit down."

"Good thinkin'," Simon offered, running his hand over his chin. "Gregory came runnin' to the outpost the second shit went down in Alexandria, so we've got him in the wings. Figure we'll have 'im squeeze his farmers; they ain't gonna risk their safety and loved ones for that crazy chick."

"What're you tryin' to say there, Si?" Negan's dark eyes flicked up to his right hand man, imagination running wild with what he'd said. "No, guess they wouldn't."

"I'll get Eugene on reinforcing the garden," Simon stood, tugging at his belt. "Regina has got some ideas for the workers, keep 'em useful."

"Right," Negan drawled, rolling his jaw as Simon moved to leave; but the rage in him was bubbling over, and it was hungry for a different kind of fight. "How're you so fuckin'... normal?"

Simon stopped in his tracks; there'd been a clear change in Negan since the Alexandria incident, and it didn't take a genius to guess why. When he himself had seen Delle fall, the tiger's claws opening up her shoulder, he'd felt his stomach flip, his blood go cold; but he couldn't have run back any more than Negan could have. He was trying to focus, keep the black evil that was stewing in him at bay; but Negan seemed to want to draw it out.

"...she's gone, Negan," he muttered, not bothering to turn to face him. "Neither of us could've saved her. We're gonna get the fuckers who did it, but it's... it's best just to move on."

"Move on," Negan snorted derisively; Lucille rolling on his shoulder. "Move on; like she was just some flavor of the fuckin' week," his words were thoroughly coated in malice, glaring a hole through the back of Simon's skull. "She actually cared about you, and you just want to move the fuck on!

Simon spun on his heel; if Negan wanted the darkness, he could have it. "Pretty fucking easy to when she was lyin' to me the whole time," he growled, Negan swept himself to his feet and rounded the table, nose to nose with him. "She was runnin' off with you any chance she got - pretty simple to forget about a slut like that!"

"Don't you ever call her that!" Negan punctuated his threat with Lucille against the table; if he wasn't careful he'd open Simon's skull. "You're just a butthurt little bitch because she didn't love you, you were just some dick for her - you should be fuckin' grateful she even considered you!"

"Right, I'm fucking honored!" Simon's mouth twitched in total fury, giving Negan a hard shove. "That little cunt didn't love shit; just climbed the ladder through beds around here!"

Lucille clattered against the table as Negan took Simon by both hands, wringing his collar and throwing him onto the same table. "YOU SHUT YOUR GODDAMN MOUTH!" He roared, a beast he couldn't name coming to life inside him. "She loved, you asshole -- just wasn't you!"

Simon gasped, the air knocked out of him, but he swung his arm and clipped Negan's jaw. It was enough to loosen his grip, get him off the table. "Fuck you, Negan; she didn't give a shit about anything or anybody around here!"
"You're an idiot then!" Negan hissed, returning Simon's punch with one of his own; he clocked him hard, fist connecting with his chin. "She was fuckin' mine, dickwad! She fuckin' chose to be!"

Simon spat, blood mixing with his saliva on the floor. "I fucking bet! She just wanted a cushier spot; wasn't ashamed to take your measly ass dick to do it!" A hefty swing landed at Negan's stomach, doubling him over; though he quickly retaliated with a gut punch of his own.

"You're so fuckin' wrong, you goddamn moron," he snarled, throwing him down to the table again, leaning over him as he pinned his shoulders. "That girl's been takin' my dick for years."

Again, who was this honesty going to hurt? Simon had no way to retaliate anymore. She was gone. His underling's eyes went saucer wide, his struggling pausing in shock. "What...?"

"Yeah, that's right you little bitch," he laughed a labored chuckle, grinning like a sly fox. "Since before all this bullshit; that body, that pussy had my prints all fuckin' over it. Took her a little time to come around, with the bat and the wives and shit, but come around she most certainly did," he leaned in closer, both their sets of eyes nearly black in anger. "She was just takin' a vacation in Simon land before comin' on home to me."

The evil in Simon was at its breaking point; he felt used, cheated, abandoned and hateful. How could she have done that? Lied so easily, cast him aside so uncaring? "You're both fucking scum," he hissed under Negan's hold. "I'm fuckin' glad she's dead."

Negan saw red and his mind went blank; when his vision returned Simon was sporting a matching lump on the other side of his jaw. "She was always too good for you," he whispered, letting the now beaten man up. "Too good for me; not that it fuckin' matters now."

Simon rubbed his burgeoning bruises, staring at Negan; he was begrudged to admit he was right. They were fighting over the ghost of a girl - one he was blindingly mad at - but it was inconsequential. They had war at their doorstep, and fighting over some whore he'd obsessed over wasn't going to help the cause. Once again, he had to swallow down that villainy inside; there'd be plenty of time for that when Alexandria was nothing more than rubble. The fight had been necessary to ease the tension between the two titans, to relieve their frustration; for the time being, he had to get away from Negan. He couldn't stand the sight of him.

"I'm gonna go check on Regina... and get your shit together. We've go a war to wage." Negan grunted in response, listening as his long, stomping strides and slamming doors carried him away. Alone at last he slumped into an empty council seat, grabbing Lucille and resting his forehead against an open gap between the wires as tears began to drip freely.

"Lucille, forgive me... what have I done?"

Chapter End Notes

...and I think we all saw this coming?

(Also I didn't realize I had so many readers from around the world! Hi from Canada!)
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They were heading off to war; a good number of them anyway. Rick had a caravan of cars dressed in scrap metal ready to go, a large portion of the citizens armed and prepared to fight. In fact they were eager for it, ready to see Negan dethroned and dead.

Little did any of the militia know they were trying to kill the father of her baby.

She had nearly fainted when those two blue lines appeared on that relic from the old world; but it confirmed her suspicions, her fears, immediately. Pregnant. "I'm going to fucking kill him." She'd declared; not that she meant it. She was just as guilty in their illicit little tango, and now she was charged with reaping what he'd sown.

It was the morning of the end, the sky grey in hazy dawn. She stared at the all too familiar ceiling, her now permanently freed hand pressed to her stomach. "Just couldn't keep it in your fucking pants, could you?" She sighed, trying to focus her mind anywhere but the cells rapidly dividing and multiplying in her womb. "Just had to fuck me bare, feels so good - douchebag. In the absence of his presence, Delle took to blaming the whole situation on him. Who was he to stop her?

She knew she had to get back to him, of course. It wasn't just a matter of safety, her fright naturally building for the baby she was growing in that den of hostiles; she needed him to know, at the very least. If he could win - he had the numbers - it'd mean a marginally safer world for their kid. Simon would be furious, of course, but he'd need to get over it. What was done was done. She took a shaky breath, rubbing the nonexistent swell there, worrying over the army outside, the dead that roamed the earth; she should've been more careful, insistent. 'I'm sorry,' she spoke inwardly to the cluster of cells working it's way to becoming a human. 'I'm sorry we brought you into this world, at this time. Nobody deserves this place,' she blinked away wet eyes. 'No matter how much your dad likes it.'

"Delle?" She craned her neck to see Carl standing at the door to the sick room; he'd been her only company for two days, Rick entirely focused on the war effort. She'd made Carl swear not to tell his father about the baby; god forbid he find out and try to leverage it into Negan's demise. He simply wrote off her vomiting as her body beginning to shut down; not like it mattered to him.

"G'morning Carl," she murmured, moving her hand to wave. "Sounds like everybody is gearing up outside. It's time, then?"

The boy nodded as he entered, choosing to stand against the wall; it was an illogical worry, but he didn't have the best track record with pregnant women, and he didn't want to leave fate to chance.

"Great," she grumbled, returning her hand to her thinly clothed belly. "Think your dad is still gonna try to kill him?"

He felt defeated; he had hoped to convince his father that mercy should prevail over wrath, but it seemed wrath was all Rick felt those days. There were times he felt like a stranger; and this was one of them. "He said... he said if the Saviors surrender, then noone else needs to die," Carl explained. "But he still wants to kill Negan himself."
The words hurt more now than they had before. Delle knew she could survive without Negan, she'd done it before; but she didn't know if she could handle another life without him. Not in their reality.

The purr of engines wafted from the road outside; it was time for the convoy to leave. "Don't you want to go see daddy off?" She asked Carl, sounding like poison.

"We've said our words," he replied; there was something to the young Grimes that was wise far beyond his years. "I'll see him when he gets back."

Unlike Delle, he was remaining hopeful. He was at just as much risk of losing his family as she was, and they both knew it. "Hopefully we both get to see our old men come home," she smirked. "Even if yours is an enormously irritating dick."

Carl nodded and stood, moving to the window to watch the convoy leave. A herd of well armored sedans rolling out of the Alexandrian gates; it was very likely many of the passengers within wouldn't see their homes again, the family they left behind might've said their goodbyes for the last time. It was all so absurd; in a world populated by the living dead, everyone seemed in such a massive hurry to add to the masses. Everyone, so ready to fight, so wary of the dead, but so eager to kill. He closed his eyes as the last of the cars rolled through and the gates shut. 'Here we go.'

"W-what are you doing?" She nearly jerked away as Carl did something she knew he wasn't supposed to; he unlocked her other wrist. It was the first time in twenty-six days she was completely free, and she didn't trust why.

"Dad said I'm runnin' the show while he's gone," Carl took her healthy arm, raising her to her feet; she wobbled a moment from the lack of use. "And I'm not comfortable keeping a pregnant lady locked up in here."

'Good god did he have to call me that?' She have him an awkward smile, taking his arm. "So where do we go?"

"We're goin' to my house," he explained, careful of her still healing shoulder. He walked her down the stairs of the small house that'd become their hospital, intent on his own home down the street. "And gettin' you cleaned up, you are rank."

"Maybe you should consider letting your prisoners bathe," she snarked, though no less grateful to him for his strange kindness. "Just a thought." As they stepped onto the porch, she felt an intense insecurity wash over her; members of Alexandria still littered the road, and it didn't take much to notice their disgust at Carl with the she-wolf on his arm.

"Carl!" Michonne - still healing herself and staying behind - marched up to the pair as they stepped into the street. "What the hell are you doing!?"

"We're going back to the house, Michonne," he muttered, continuing on their path. Delle swayed and held on to him tightly, wondering if his surrogate mother might draw her sword and run her through. "Dad left me in charge; I'm fine with her being a person."

"She could turn on you!" She hissed, keeping up with their step.

"All due respect, but do I really look like I'm any freakin' threat right now?" Delle piped up; she could only reliably use one arm, was in no state to run, and Carl had a good few pounds and inches on her. "I couldn't do much and I wouldn't get far."
The older woman simply gave her an intense look, untrusting and cautious - who could really blame her, staring at Negan's queen? "You can't bend for these people, Carl; especially this one."

"I'm not bending. I'm doin' what she would do," they were on his familiar veranda now, Delle wondering if she really would've been as kind to him as he'd been to her. "You can get on board with that or not. That's on you."

Michonne followed as they wandered through the dawn lit house, Carl walking her up to their bathroom; a month's worth of bed rest and very little else, she really needed a shower. "I'm not leavin' her alone in here," she declared as Carl set her down on the closed toilet seat. "She needs to be watched if she won't be tied down."

"Fine by me," Delle agreed; though her feelings weren't taken into account then. "Probably gonna need help gettin' these jeans off, washin' behind my ears," she grinned at the clear discomfort she caused; sometimes she couldn't help digging a deeper hole for herself. "You guys don't have that apricot-mango scrubbing bead body wash bullshit by chance?"

They stared in answer; Michonne in irritation, Carl in expectation. Delle sighed and ran her good hand over her face, staring at the pair. "Sorry... my mouth gets away from me sometimes. I do appreciate this, I do. Michonne," she summoned up her best etiquette. "If you would be a kind as to help me undress? Get me standin' in the tub and I can do the rest." She stared back, finally settling on an affirmative nod. 'There we go, gettin' somewhere.'

"I'll, uh-- I'm gonna find some spare clothes." Carl made himself scarce in a hurry; for a teenage boy he wasn't all too eager to see a naked girl.

"That's a respectful boy you two are raisin'," Delle pointed, Michonne stepping closer to give her aid. "Not stickin' around to gawk at the slut of the Sanctuary, that's a class act right there."

"Nobody calls you that." She muttered, looking away as she went to pull Delle's tank top over her head; she moved her arms up, only to find that her injured one would only raise so high. It wasn't pain - it was as if the joint in her arm had been limited, hitching in some new groove. It meant she could only get it as high as the shoulder itself. 'Guess that's that.' Michonne noticed it as well, careful to slot both arms out of the garment individually, letting her flex the hand of her damaged arm. The jeans were easier, but she could smell herself much more clearly naked; she pitied Michonne for being the one stuck with her.

She got her standing in the shower, Delle bracing herself against the wall. "Much obliged." she muttered; but Michonne was already pulling the curtain closed, hanging back to leave her be. She sighed, switching on the tap; the water ran cold, but at least it was clean. The bar soap let her scrub the month's worth of grime from her body, everywhere she could reach; she spent most of her time under the spray using it to hide her tears streaming down her face, running both hands over her belly while the steady stream of filth slicked from her body and down the swirling drain. 'How the hell did I let this happen? ' She wanted to pound her head against the wall, nonplussed by her own irresponsibility. 'Did I really think things would be like they were? Just because we're together again suddenly he can't get me pregnant?' She didn't resent the child by any means - in another time she might've even called herself excited - but she hated the world and the world hated her back. It was not the place she wanted to bring a baby into, not by a long shot. 'How're we gonna keep it alive, Negan? What are we gonna do?'

"You ready in there?" Michonne asked; apparently five minutes was pushing her luck.
"Yeah," she grunted, switching off the taps and wringing out her long mane. "Ready as I'll ever be."

Negan was by no means a fan of Gregory; even less so having him in his own house. Simon had been so supremely confident in his plan, to flex the hand that gripped the collective throats at Hilltop; but Negan wasn't certain of it yet. Thusly, his logical brain told him to bring Gregory himself to the Sanctuary, and give Negan the whole spiel from the horse's mouth.

"Well, I, uh I'd just like to start by saying thank you for having me here today," he really wasn't sure how Simon had convinced him to hear out the annoying old man's sputtering, but he tolerated him for the time. "Negan, let me lay this down straight for you. I know how it is negotiating the slippery, steep terrain of managing resources and the population and the big, scary 'U'. But you might know, it's called the unknown," Negan raised a brow - was that supposed to be poignant?  "Listen, I-I mean it when I say it -- Negan, I don't like killing people any more than you do--"

"I like killin' people." He interrupted, a hollow smirk on his lips. Killing was the only thing that really felt like living anymore; a quick exertion of power that proved to him he was still breathing, even if she wasn't.

"Oh..." Gregory went whiter than paper, glancing to his pal Simon at his left.

"Well, I -- I say it's about killing the right people," Negan was destroyed, emotionally; but that didn't keep his tactical mind from functioning. If anything he was sharper than ever; Alexandria would pay, the others would fall in line. Easy-peasy; and Gregory was the first step. "So, you kill the right people at the right time everything falls into place. Everybody's happy; well, some people more than others. But you kill one, and you could be saving hundreds more. And that is what we are all about. We save people." 'Everyone we can.' He added to himself.

'But not when it really matters.' His cruel angels had been punishing him for a month.

"T-That's why they call you the Saviors!" Gregory sounded like he'd made some monumental discovery. 'Jesus fuck - Delle, give me strength.'

Gregory's plan was as Simon had told it to him; tell the Hilltop that standing with the Widow was a blatant act of defiance and treason, and if they stuck by her, they and all their loved ones would be out on their asses. Negan didn't feel all that secure with this grease stain of a man, and made it known.

"If you're the guy, if, indeed, you have always been the guy, then why the hell didn't you know about the Widow leading an army of your people straight up my ass in Alexandria?" There was a sheen of sweat on Gregory's balding brow, and Negan knew he had him in a lie. "You know what I think, Gregory? I think you're playing both sides. I think you are a thin-dicked politician threading the needle with your thin, thin dick," his rage was boiling in his skin; god he wanted to kill, just something to relieve all that pain inside. "Now, is listening to you the right way to go, or is it the right place and time for something else?"

Gregory turned into a simpering pile of fear after that; as was the reaction he was gunning for. Negan needed honesty from those around him if things were truly going to play out in his favor; but Gregory's only talent seemed to be in turning coats.
It took Simon to eventually calm him down, taking over for the weakling’s line of thought. "If we go in with the right stage picture, a thick and veiny show of force surrounding Gregory when he lays down the law, I think things go back to copacetic. If they don't, we take a flyer on the place and kill everyone there," 'Oh that is a goddamn no-no Simon - this isn't fuckin' Oceanside.' "Unfortunate play, but the other communities will get the message, and we achieve equilibrium. Plan A. Plan B--"

Lucille came down hard against the table, silencing the room. "People are a resource," Negan growled, rising from his seat, his precious bat marking his words. "Money on the table. People are the foundation of what we are building here!! Who the hell do you think you're talking to?" After their fight, they'd functioned well enough; now though, Simon needed to rein it in and fast to keep his head. "Are you confused about who we are? Are you confused about who is in charge? Are we backsliding, Simon? Please, tell me we're not backsliding."

For all the hate festering between them, right then and there was not the time for Simon to put his life on the line. "No... we're not backsliding."

'You're fucking right you're not. This is my fucking house.' "Plan A is taking the Rick, the widow, and King Assface alive and making them dead in a very, very public and instructive way," killing the right people sometimes meant he didn't get to kill all he wanted; but he'd try to enjoy it nonetheless. "We kill the right people in the wrongest way possible, and we make them watch--"

Negan was ready to launch into one of his fullblown tirades, but before he could, a chorus of gunshots like knocks at a door played from outside his gates

It seemed they had unexpected guests.

Chapter End Notes

Starting season 8 proper now! Hold on to your bats folks!!

No new new chapter tomorrow night guys :( my day job is running me ragged. Expect the next chapter on Monday at midnight EST!

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Chapter 96

Chapter Notes

Dropped a past hint in this one!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Well. Talk about a day going all to shit.

Rick, a thorn in Negan's paw to the last, came ready to kill all he could. Both of those two titans had their own terms the other could agree to; neither set either would agree with. The Alexandrian offered the lieutenants - all the Saviors - their lives if they surrendered then and there; Gavin balked for a moment, but Negan's loyal men went unswayed. He was touched.

Gregory was less than useless; all from Hilltop who'd come didn't heed his warning, because they knew the truth. Gregory wasn't 'the guy' anymore; it was all the Widow and her merry band of shit disturbers. Yet another headache; but Negan knew Rick was past the point of no return when he started counting. 'Cheeky little fuck.'

The gunfire from the militia rained down on the Saviors as everyone split in different directions; it was total mayhem, and as Negan finally took a breath, hunkered down in a nearly pitch black trailer, he could hear the sounds of the war beginning outside; shouting, gunfire, shattering glass, and the hiss of the dead beginning to swarm his hiding place.

He felt stupid. He'd been distracted. His people could very well die without him - in fact they probably would - and coming off the heels of Delle's loss, it was more jarring than he'd expected it to be. Most of the Sanctuary occupants weren't made to fight, like she had been; and knowing his lieutenants - particularly Simon - they'd be first to go. In times of war, civilians became fodder; fodder Simon wouldn't be willing to save.

'Fuckin' Rick. Fuckin' Widow. Fuckin' Ezekiel,' He cursed everyone under the sun - even himself - for letting things get to this point. He should've killed Rick when he had the chance. 'What am I gonna do, Delle?' From between the plastic blinds that covered the trailer windows, he saw deliberate movement - that priestly little thing from Alexandria had somehow wound up on the wrong side of the fence, and he was fighting off the dead left and right. He looked panicked, terrified, and totally out of place. Was Rick forcing the unwilling to fight now too? But that was a question for a different time; because said little priest was entering Negan's same trailer, totally unaware of the wolf he was sharing it with.

Maybe he'd have some fun after all.

"I hope you got your shitting pants on." Negan couldn't help a little gleeful tone; he'd been left with one of the biggest sops in the enemies' forces, and God knows he was gonna play with him a little.

"W-what?" The priest squeaked, turning to the darkness that shrouded the tyrant of Sanctuary.

"Your shittin' pants. I hope you're wearing them right now... 'cause you are about to shit your pants."
From the look on his face, he might've done just that.

Negan's new friend was called Gabriel; he was a real deal, god fearing priest, who'd chosen to come for the safety of his friends, and to find out what meaningful moment God had planned for his end. That seemed cocky, even to Negan; to expect the Almighty to give you some unforgettable sacrifice of a death, just because? It was asking a lot. On top of that, his death had almost been just another bite in the herd of the dead; spineless little Gregory had split when he'd paused to save him.

"The point of your life would be saving that dickhead?" Negan was nonplussed by the concept; Gregory, it seemed, was one of the few not worth saving.

"That wouldn't be it..." Gabriel seemed to be in a trance, trying to work out why he'd done it, what his reasoning was. "There had to be some reason I did what I did. Maybe this is the reason." His dark eyes turned up to stare at Negan like he'd just found the meaning of life.

"What?"

"I think I'm here to take your confession."

'Well there goes my fun.' "You and your pals just tried to send me to kingdom come; forgive me if I'm not feelin' chatty." He sank against a wall and got comfortable, watching the priest across from him.

"It's not about a chat," Gabriel spoke gently, as kindly as he could when addressing Negan. "It's about absolving yourself of sin; letting go of your weaknesses so God can give you strength."

His mind automatically brought Delle's face to the forefront, soon followed by Lucille. The real Lucille. "I don't have shit to confess." He muttered, his angels berating him for that all out lie.

"Even the best of us have something to let go of," he insisted. "Something weighing down our hearts."

He was beginning to get on Negan's nerves; more so than he already was. "Let me ask you somethin'," he tilted his head back, sizing up the smaller man. "Why'd you become a priest?"

"I love God, and I love people. I wanted to bring them together. To help people through their difficult times, to help them through their weaknesses." Gabriel replied, sounded annoyingly devout.

"You n' I have that in common, Gabey," he chuckled, casting his arms out. "I like to help people through their weaknesses, too. Been doing it one way or another my whole life." 'Whether or not its worked has been fuckin' spotty.'

Even in the darkness of the trailer, Negan could see the look of confused disgust on Gabriel's face. "How do you help people?"

"You want to know why people are gonna start dying in there?" This - this was the crux on which he rested the foundations of the Sanctuary, the Saviors. He could keep people living; but he had to be alive to do it. "Because I'm not there to stop it."

Gabriel pulled another face. "That's... incredibly arrogant."
In response Negan shrugged his shoulders. "It's fucking correct; my people are smart, but they need me around to keep those wheels turning. I am a necessary evil to keep this world runnin'."

As much as Negan intimidated him, terrified him, Gabriel pressed on. "How... you helped the weak, before this?"

"Kids," Negan admitted, the faces of long gone students playing in his mind. "You don't show 'em the way, well, they turn out like garbage. Little assholes become big ones, so..." his mind's eye stopped on Delle, long before the affair, the flirtations; standing in his office, grinning while he signed her yearbook. "You've got to show 'em the way."

Gabriel seemed strangely engrossed; somehow in the darkness it almost didn't feel like this was the same man, the murderous warlord. But, alas, it was.

"Adults need it too," Negan continued, Delle aging into that beautiful young woman in his head, running around his track at sunrise, that morning light had imprinted her image in him forever. "Be it with government, laws, religion," he wiggled a finger at Gabriel. "Guilt. People are weak."

"Everyone?" Gabriel was baiting him, and he bit.

"Everyone."

"You're weak then," Gabriel declared; he didn't know how right he was. "Killing the innocent."

Well, not right about that.

"Right and goddamn wrong," Negan retorted, feeling the beat of the wall against his back; the corpses were insistent on him joining them. "I am weak, but my 'killing the innocent'? That ain't why, Gabey." He heard vinyl creak behind him and shot up, standing just in time as hands of the dead broke through the trailer walls; they weren't large gaps, but they could and would grow. 'Simon best get off his dick and solve this shit.'

Gabriel was bent on that confession now; he needed to know his trust in his God was returned, that he wasn't simply destined to be the man who died with Negan. "Then confess your weakness; We might be dead soon. You may be dead," he swallowed thickly, his own nerves mounting inside him. "Wouldn't you want to confess before all that happens? Wouldn't you want absolution before that? Forgiveness? Costs you nothing more than saying the truth aloud," Negan rolled his eyes and turned away from the priest's would-be sermon. "You don't think you have anything to confess? People you've killed?"

"I haven't killed anyone who didn't need it." The way he said it made it sound like a therapy session.

"The workers you treat like slaves?" He was really grating on him now.

"It's an economy. Some people win, some people lose, but no one's a slave, no one's going hungry, and you couldn't say that before all this." Negan had an answer for everything.

Well, nearly everything.

"Carl told us about your wives," Gabriel murmured in his quiet, infuriating tone. "And that poor young girl you lead on, parading around like she's a circus animal."

'Oh he better not be talkin' about my girl.' "Wives are dead," he replied, trying to keep cool. "And
every one of those ladies had a choice, God rest their souls."

"And the girl?" Negan's practiced nonchalance didn't sway Gabriel; he knew he'd found a sore vein. "That young thing you twisted the mind of, broke down into thinking you love her? Is there some grand excuse for her?"

He couldn't hold back; his hands gripped at Lucille and swung, Gabriel narrowly dodging as he swept up the last firearm he had, trying to shoot at Negan with no avail. His flight instinct kicked in, and he threw himself past the only door the trailer contained; it separated into a bedroom, keeping him from an angry Negan. He was scared, but he knew he'd found it.

Negan's weakness.

But he was tired of that cat and mouse game; the dead outside were close to busting through, and however dead inside he felt, he had no plans on making the outside match anytime soon. "C'mon Gabey," he drawled, leaning his head against the door. "We've got Lucille to get us back to Sanctuary. That gun. We should use it," he was exhausted, but was trying his best to be convincing. "We can take a chance, we can 'gut up', play dead ones across the courtyard. Or... Or I can just kill you, but that is not what I want. What I want is for you to work with me. That is all I ever want." It truly was. That had always been the plan, before Rick the Prick fucked it all to hell.

Gabriel shuddered, trying to calm himself. He realized he'd need to share his own weaknesses before Negan would admit his own. "I've killed before, but that's not my greatest sin. No... I locked my congregation out of my church when this all just started," his heart still broke at the sounds of their screams in his ears. "I listened to them die as I cowered. I failed them. I failed God. And every day, I work to lessen that failure, to be of service and purpose. Now I offer you the assurance of a pardon, penance, and absolution. I will go with you. I will show you that working together as equals is the only true way to grace, to a future," he took a breath. "I will do this... if you confess."

Negan glanced to the clawing hands at the broken wall; the hole was growing wider, soon they'd bust through. He'd spent weeks pouring his heart out to all the wrong people; maybe it'd feel freeing to admit the truth to a man sworn to keep it secret. 'What else have I got to lose?'

"Well fuck, Gabe," he snickered, hollow and someplace else. "That is some spineless, cowardly shit... but I guess that's what a confession is supposed to be, right? Guts on the table," he closed his eyes; and there was his beautiful Delle, there in his mind, her smile soft and eyes loving. Her memory carried him on. "That girl, the one you called a circus animal."

Gabriel's ears pricked up; he'd met said girl personally now, knew where she slept. Did Negan? "Delle?"

'Surprised he knows her name.' "Delle... that's my girl. I loved her, long before all this shit started," he could almost hear Gabriel gasp behind the door. "She was... she was everything, even when I didn't treat her like she was. I had a... a wife, then... and don't give me any of that 'married in the eyes of God' bullshit, what I had with Delle was real," it still hurt to think about Lucille. He'd hurt her so terribly, and when he'd gone back to her, every day had only pained him more. "I should've left her, I knew it the minute I kissed that girl... I should've followed Delle to the ends of the earth... but I didn't. She... I left her alone. She was all alone," he thought of the very last time he'd seen her before the world ended; tears, bloodshot eyes, pleading. "I let her go. I lost her; and then I lost her again. I couldn't even keep her alive in this shit storm. And once again, all I've got left is a memory... that is how I was weak."
Gabriel had never been in such a position before; he literally held Negan's salvation in his hands. He though she was dead... this was the meaning. This was the purpose. Cautiously, he opened the door to his captor, Negan's face just as hard, his eyes a little wet. "You're forgiven."

He received a punch square in his nose for it. "Thanks." Negan replied; the confession had opened a series of wounds within him, stinging and sore. But maybe this time they'd heal.

"Negan, there's something you should know." Gabriel made him pause as he set to work pulling in a singular corpse, preparing it to wear it's innards.

"What's that? God's got my back or some shit?" He didn't even bother looking up, dragging his hunting knife across the undead's putrid belly.

"Delle," Gabriel couldn't help but feel the grace of the Almighty around him. "She's alive."

On the balance, Delle might've picked the chained hospice bed to this.

Carl had left before noon; he had something to do outside the walls, but was adamant that she was not to be restrained again.

"She's not a wild animal," Carl had told Michonne, slipping his pack across his body. "She's smart enough not to go killing everybody."

'It's about killin' the right people, Carl,' she'd thought it but hadn't said it; it felt good to have her wrists free, and she didn't want to give that up. 'It's just not time for any of you to die.' A lack of physical restraints didn't mean freedom though; and as such, Delle sat with her legs crossed on Rick's sofa, Michonne staring at her from barely a few feet away. At least in the sick bed they left her alone. Michonne's glaring came from a place of caution; she'd had to see too many friends and loved ones die due to negligence, and it wasn't happening that day, not with Rick gone, not with Judith right upstairs. So she stared, ready to act despite her own injuries, at the maniacal she-wolf of the Saviors; though she hardly looked like her red leather self anymore. The shower had left her hair soft, a vague fluffy kink falling into the length across her shoulders, and Carl had scrounged up a roughspun mauve tunic, along with elasticized leggings. She looked impossibly soft, and Michonne had to keep the memory of her deadly qualities ever present in her mind.

"So..." Delle huffed, throwing her legs up on the couch. "You just gonna gawk at me all day?"

"Just want to be sure you won't try anything." Michonne's arms crossed as she leaned against the wall, her eyes like a hawk's.

"Again, what could I possibly do?" She threw up her good hand, the marred shoulder still throbbed from excessive use. "Tony the fucking tiger tried to turn me into mince meat, am I really supposed to overthrow Alexandria as I am?"

'And pregnant too, you messy bitch.' Her angels were cackling at her comeuppance.

Michonne stepped forward, hoping her strength would be obvious. "Judith is right upstairs," she growled. "And I'm not about to leave you alone with Rick's daughter--"
"--whoa hold the fuck up, you really think I'd kill a baby? A fucking baby!" Delle let her mouth drop open in an exaggerated gape. "I might be the enemy but that's fucking barbaric. I don't go runnin' around killin' kids, no matter what huge dickbags their daddies are."

Michonne hoped dearly that her words were honest; Judith meant as much to her as all the Grimes clan did, and she couldn't imagine living with herself if she was hurt on her watch. So still, she stared.

Delle scoffed and rolled her eyes to the ceiling. The older woman was vigilantly irritating, but she got the feeling she wouldn't sway her in this. A cool relief washed over her as she heard the door swing open, a set - maybe two - of footsteps coming inside.

"I'm back," Carl called into the house, searching for the two women. "I, uh, I brought somebody along..." he came across Michonne and Delle locked in their little staring contest, both looking ready to kill the other. "You two alright?"

"Fucking peachy." Delle snarled.

Michonne looked to Carl and their new guest; both looked worse for wear with blood spattering their clothes, the new visitor tall and thin, a young man. "Who's this?"

"M-My name is Sidiq," he spoke quietly, shyly as Delle turned her attention to him as well. "Carl was kind to me, brought me into your amazing community," he was going above and beyond to be friendly; and got a little too mouthy. "I-I was a med student before all this; Carl said his friend needed help with her pregnancy?"

Delle's eyes and mouth went saucer wide before transforming into a furious scowl; Carl merely looked to his new, talkative friend, Michonne returning her glare at Delle. Sidiq just looked confused.

"You're pregnant!?!" Michonne hissed.

"I-I'm sorry, I didn't realize it was a secret!" Sidiq stammered.

"It's okay Sidiq; Delle, I--" Delle heaved herself up, staring daggers into Carl's soul.

"What happened to keep your fucking mouth shut, Carl?!"

Chapter End Notes

Phew!! Gettin' shit going!

Sometimes I wonder about the folks who stopped commenting/reading; I wonder where I lost them. If ya'll are still out there ilysomuch, thanks for sticking it out with me!

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU! ♡♡♡♡
It should've been easier, right?

He'd left Lucille, he'd been honest with her - or at least as honest as he was ever going to be - he'd moved into the local motel. He was a single man for the first time in years, to the outside world at least, and he was trying to be genuine with Delle. So why wasn't it easier?

There were parts that felt lighter, sure - the sex no longer held that bitter undercurrent of a married man, and their conversations were as fluid and effortless as ever. The kisses were sweeter, his touch was hotter; things were better all around.

But something was different. Something she couldn't place.

Though with his head between her thighs and fingers deep inside her, she wasn't really worried about it.

"O-oh fuck, yes right there!" She was arching off the motel's door - she'd barely got inside the room before he'd ripped her pants from her legs, one limb thrown over his shoulder - as her fingers gripped his hair, holding him in place. She could feel his cheeks dimpling against her sex, that hotter than hell tongue dancing across her in firm, practiced strokes; even those dark eyes seemed playful from beneath his brows, watching as he unravelled her in their own private love nest. She groaned loudly as a third finger joined its mates, the prodding against that angelic spot inside her made her head and eyes roll back. "Gahh fuck, I'm so close--"

He pulled away and out in a hurry, absentmindedly wiping off his scruff as he stood, grinning like a wolf. She panted and growled at the frustrating loss, her pussy throbbing in time with her rapid heartbeat. "What gives, Negan? Your jaw lock up or something?" Despite the poison on her tongue, her thighs practically shone with the juices he'd worked up, betraying her annoyance. "Or do you need to take out your dentures?"

"Hardly, sweetheart," he purred, his belt unbuckling and denim unzipping; he was hard as stone as he unsheathed his cock, precome pebbling at his flared tip, and good god did she hate how her mouth watered for it. Her mouth wasn't his goal, though. "I just want the first time you come tonight to be around my dick - if that's not too much of a task for ya?" He knew it wasn't; his strong arms hoisted her up as hers instinctively tugged around his neck, his hands leaving prints in the flesh of her thighs. The very sight of his length pressed into her swollen pink folds could've had him coming like a teenager; but he wanted her filled to bursting before the sun rose the next morning.

"Think I can deal with that," she smirked, letting her mouth fall flush to his while his tip prodded at her entrance; that first push always had her clenching tight, his heat a welcome visitor inside her whenever he could be. "Ahh... make me come, Negan...!" His name turned into a moan as he stuffed her full, inch by inch, his thick girth stretching her in well-known pleasure. That feeling, when he'd simply hold himself, buried balls deep in her sex - she wouldn't trade that for anything. "Mmah..."
"Mm, I love it when you make those sounds, babygirl," he husked, drawing his hips back to snap them in again, earning himself a yelped whimper. "Do it again."

"Make me, teach," he found his pace, languid and steady, the curve of his cock rubbing all the right spots. She released panted moans with every thrust, wrapping her legs around him, stringing her fingers through his hair. "Make me scream."

He grinned into her mouth at her request, letting his lips melt into a fevered kiss, tongue probing her own as he threw himself into her, each ram of his cock a little harder, a little faster; he'd get her to where she needed to be, but he wanted to take his time. They finally had some time. "Fuck, how the hell do you always feel so good, baby? Hot damn..."

She leaned past his face to nip at his neck, her teeth catching his ear and inducing a growl. "Mm... I hate to admit that you do this to me," she murmured, nails digging through his tshirt, curved marks into his flesh. "It's all you, teach."

His pride swelled along with his cock, fucking her harder, possessively. "Oh yeah, sweetheart? I make you this wet? This needy?"

Her back curved again as he punctuated his questions with rougher snaps, one hand sliding between them to find that pearl of nerves at the mound, teasing mercilessly. "Nn F-fuck, yes, Negan!"

"I make this hot little pussy gush n' tighten up, don't I?" He snarled, feeling as though he was claiming her for the first time, her walls fluttering and clenching around him like she'd never let him go.

"G-god, yes," she cried out as his fingers twisted, direct pressure mounting from outside and in had her racing to the precipice, her skin blushing and eyes glazing over. "Fuck yes you do, goddamn it."

"I'm gonna make you come," he promised, almost threatened, feeling and seeing the effects he had on her; he needed to feel it, needed to see her undone. "I'm the only one who can make you come, isn't that right sweetheart?"

"Yes, yes! Mm almost there, fuck, I-I--" she couldn't put into words what was happening to her, devolving into screams of wanton lust, her climax washing over every inch of her body, squeezing his cock tight as he fucked her right on through, drawing out every muscle spasm, every delicious ache. He carried her right through, til he overwhelmed her and she was whimpering, pushing her hands at his shoulders. "F-fuck..."

Easy, sweet girl, I got you," he murmured, sliding his still rock hard length from her channel, dripping in her spendings, helping her stand on shaky legs. "Goddamn I love makin' you do that; you come with your whole damn body."

She chuckled, still clinging to him tightly. "Well you do it pretty often," she let her head lean into his chest, proper feeling beginning to return to her limbs. "You'd better be half decent at it by now."

"Half decent!?" He put on his most insulted tone, pulling her hair. "How dare you; I've seen those pretty little eyes roll back enough times to know I'm better than 'half decent'!"

She smirked, her muscles finally beginning to work again, enough for her to stand. To kneel. "Alright, maybe you're... okay at it," she relented, and let her body drop to her knees before him.
"I'm a goddamn star, though." She grasped the base of his cock in her slender fingers, guiding him into her greedy mouth, tongue slurping along his length and tasting herself on him.

"Oh shit goddamn!" He rasped, one arm propping himself up on the door while the other fist in her mane; her head bobbed gleefully along his cock, licking and suckling like he contained the nectar of the gods. "I'm not gonna argue with that, mm yeah..." he tilted his head to watch her, those brilliant bright eyes shining up with mischief and hunger, ready to swallow; and with her talents, she wouldn't need to wait much longer. "Oh yes that's it, babygirl, mm..."

'\textit{C'mon, quit holdin' out on me geezer!}' She begged inwardly, a moan vibrating against him as her cheeks hollowed, eager for his taste. She could sense his muscles starting to twitch, growled out breaths ripping from his throat, those dark eyes she loved hooded and ready to give her what she wanted. She whimpered around him, her free hand sliding up his hip, fingers splayed across his stomach, practically begging as her mouth and hand picked up a fervent speed; and that did it.

"Nngh fuck, Delle yes!" He roared as his release painted her throat white, filling her mouth and holding her down, her nose nestled in his curls while his hips twitched with monumental spasms. "Holy shit; you are a goddamn cock-sucking virtuoso baby."

He let her free to gasp and swallow his remnants, a few beads of his seed bubbling along her lips, quickly swept up by her tongue. "Told you," she grinned, accepting his hand to get her standing, mouth moist with a concoction of their fluids. "I'm a goddamn star."

He smirked and wrapped his arms around her, pulling her in for the tight hug he'd intended to greet her with; but as soon as he swung that door open for her, he had to have her then and there. Bachelor life suited him fine but had the surprising effect of increasing his hunger for her tenfold. In his weeks since leaving Lucille, he'd made it so she could hardly walk without a dull throb in between her legs. "Missed you, you little shit."

She pulled back enough to kiss him softly; it was a welcoming sort of kiss, one she hadn't felt free to give him before. That part, at least, was easier. "You too, you fucking geezer," she whispered, stepping further into the room and finally losing her sweater and bra; she had all night to spend with him and didn't see the point in dressing again. He'd just rip it from her within the hour. "How's motel life treating you?"

"Oh bloody magical," he chuckled, kicking off his loosened layers, reveling in Delle's appraisal of his bare skin. "Completely impersonal, totally impermanent; but this hot little number keeps showing up at my door, so who am I to complain?" She was coiled on the over used motel bed, and as he crawled beside her she fit snugly under his arm like a puzzle piece.

"Heh, sounds like the lap of luxury," she kissed over his chest, lips studying the ink in his skin. "Aren't you a lucky bastard?"

'\textit{Be luckier if you'd just come away with me.}' He couldn't hide his real wishes from his mind; if he could he would've driven to her apartment that same fateful night, loaded up her and Fang and whatever they needed and skipped on to the next town. Hell, he still would have; but she wouldn't have gone with him, might've even broke things off. He had to be realistic. "The luckiest." He decided on the safer bet, kissing at her mane of hair.

She held him tightly - tighter than she thought she would - as if he still had a wife to go running back to, as if there was a time limit. How strange it was that when faced with all the time in the world, she grew so self-conscious. She found herself wondering if she was enough to hold his undivided
"Have you... have you talked to her?" She asked softly. This split wasn't as easy as calling things off and giving back each other's toothbrushes; Negan and Lucille's lives were intertwined, legally and personally. They were merely separated for the time being, nothing set in stone, and to make things stick he would need to face her and unlace his life from hers bit by bit.

"Been tryin'," he huffed, his eyes focusing on the popcorn ceiling. "She only answers now and then, or won't return my calls. I hate to say it but I think she's holdin' out that I might come back," it twisted the guilt-born knife in his heart to think of Lucille hoping so desperately for him to return; it just wasn't going to happen. "It's killin' me - but it's not supposed to be a walk in the park, I guess."

There was a penance to be paid for what they'd done, no matter how real and raw their love was.

"Par for the course," she declared, absentmindedly playing with his chest hair. "There's no goin' back now; even if I up and died tomorrow--" she could hear his heart suddenly accelerate in his chest at the mere suggestion. "--there's no un-knowing what she knows now."

"You're right about that," His girl was bright, even when she didn't think so. He hadn't told her about Lucille's plea. If it had been a one time only slip in their marriage, she might've forgiven him - but it wasn't. Delle wasn't just a mistake, or some misplaced hand or kiss; she and Negan were stitched from the same cloth, and both knew they'd never found anyone who matched the other quite the same way. No, Delle was the rest of his life. "Safe guess you've told Fang about this?"

She nodded; honesty had once again become policy in the Cornish household, no matter how shameful or damning. Fang had only managed a tight nod at the news, no doubt filled with as many questions as his sister; would she and Negan go public? Would he ask her to move in with him? Would they even stay in their one horse town? He hadn't asked any of those, of course. He'd simply nodded. "Yeah, the whole story... think he's still pretty skeezed by this whole deal, but he's trying to put on a brave face for me."

"As brothers are supposed to do," Negan murmured, the backs of his fingers stroking her arm. "At least the good ones."

"He's the best at it," she glanced up to his face to see his eyes darkening by the second; being in each other's proximity had some incredible carnal effects. '"Lets go, teach.' "You look like you want something, Negan."

Her voice was a throaty little purr, that smile devilish and inviting; but he wanted much more than she could give him that singular night. He was still picturing throwing their clothes on, packing a bag and driving off into the night; but it simply wasn't the right time. He hoped there would be one, though. He kept that hope in his head while he hoisted her onto his lap, running a hand from her bent knee up to her breast. "I think you know just what I want, Delle," his spare hand gave her backside a hard swat, enough to make her roll her hips. "And you're gonna give it to me."

Oh she was, and she did; she lost track of how many times he gave it back that night. By the time she woke the next morning, his handprints were permanent marks on her hips, his mouth having left claiming little spots across her chest and throat. 'Turtlenecks for awhile.' She decided as she dressed; careful not to wake him as the sun crested outside. In all their times falling asleep in unfamiliar beds, they rarely ever woke up together; in some ways she liked it like that. Maybe there was still some tiny insecurity haunting her heart that would lie to her, tell her that he'd come to his senses in the morning, send her away never to return. It was an impossibility, but she didn't wait around long enough to find out. She would merely slip away, dressing silently and kissing his stubbled cheek.
every time. Sometimes he'd be awake for it and just pretend otherwise; if that was what she needed to keep coming back to him, he'd gladly oblige.

And yet still, as she walked through the cool morning air, tugging on the collar of her jacket, something still ate away at her. He was free now; yet her guilt still boiled the minute she left his vicinity. 'He can love me now,' she reasoned, pausing in front of his beat-up, well loved truck. 'He's free to... why do I have to be so scared to let him?'

She couldn't place it; much like she couldn't place the silver hatchback sedan sitting in the furthest corner of the lot. She didn't even notice the honey-blond woman sitting inside, had no idea of how her heart was breaking as she learned the bartender she'd been confiding in for months had been sleeping with her husband.

Chapter End Notes

GASP! Feelings! Reveals!! Heartbreak!!!

Thanks for all your great comments today my loves :) I had a bit of surgery done, so getting to read your thoughts and reactions really made me feel better! ♡♡♡♡

As always, like my stuff? Leave me a comment! Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU! ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 98

Chapter Notes

One of my top 5 favorite Negan lines in this one...

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

'Alive.'

'She's alive.'

'Somewhere in Alexandria, she's alive.'

'And that dickbag thorn in my ass cheek Rick the goddamn prick fucking hid her from me.'

Negan stewed as hot water cascaded over him; Gabriel's news had set a fresh fire in his belly, and with a tried and true coating of dead organs around his and his new pal's shoulders, they'd made it back inside Sanctuary. Having quelled the general citizens' fears upon his apparent resurrection, he bee-lined for a shower to rid himself of the putrescent stink of the dead. He'd never felt better in years; or more furious.

'My babygirl is alive,' He grinned in spite of himself, massaging soap thoroughly across his flesh, the stench and goo of the dead slicking away as he marvelled at the veritable miracle Gabriel had provided. He didn't believe him at first, thought he meant in a she-lives-on-in-your-memory type of way; but he was certain, swearing on his beloved god that it was the truth. Carl had saved her. 'That's the kind of kid I want in my corner. Savin' my girl even when he's playin' on the wrong team,' He let his head fall back, the water slicking down his dark hair and beading droplets across his lashes and growing beard. 'I've got to get my girl.'

He wasn't oblivious to the fact that he'd be facing the brunt of her own anger when she got back to him; he didn't go looking for her for one, but he'd also been running his mouth to anyone who'd listen. Now Eugene knew; worse, Simon knew all about them, their history. He'd fucked up something fierce, but he'd let her bite his head off all she needed to. She was alive. And he had to get to her.

Rick and his merry band of assholes had made that mighty difficult though. The outside perimeter was surrounded by the undead hordes, clamoring for a bite of fresh flesh; and with their weapons divvied up between outposts and home base, they didn't have the ammunition to escape as well as tear every member of that pesky militia a new asshole. Things weren't looking great.

But Negan still had Eugene.

Dressed in his refreshed leather, not a drop of death on it, he listened to Eugene's plan. It was optimistic to say the least - mow down the rows upon rows of dead outside, and send Eugene to the bullet factory to get supplies up and running - but it was their best shot. Simon had arrived moments earlier with reports of a goddamn garbage truck crashing into a loading dock; already his people were dying. And that would not stand.
What choice did he have? He had people to save, and a girl to rescue.

"It'll take an ass-load of ammo." He muttered; it really would. The guns had already been depleted from the earlier fire fights with Prick and the gang, and clearing out a full herd would mean taking them down nearly to zero.

"It will. Even with shot discipline and P and Q mindin'." At least the mullet headed scientist was being realistic.

"Can my bullet maker fill my guns back up?" His brows knit and his head tilted back, sizing up the man.

"If you give my machines to me or me to my machines that is an affirmative." Eugene replied dutifully.

'Damn, I do love a loyal dog.' "You do realize the storm of shit I'm gonna dump on Rick as soon as I am clear of the shit storm he dumped on me," Negan hummed, Lucille draping his shoulder. "I'm gonna kill that fuckhead like the dirty fuckin' snake he is. He's been holdin' my girl captive out there - like she's an animal."

In matters of the heart, it took Eugene a little longer to put two and two together. "A-are you layin' down that miss Delle is in truth still walkin'-talkin', livin' and breathin' out there?"

Negan's grin was so wide it almost hurt his dimples. "Seems Delle is as bad at dyin' as I am," he chuckled; he wondered how he ever even thought she was dead. 'Not my girl.' "But that doesn't change the fact that Rick's been keepin' her chained and bound up like a lesser life form. So," he leaned across the table. "You think you can keep my people safe, and help me get my girl out of his greasy clutches?"

Eugene gulped; but it was in his own best interests to survive. "I can promise you, Negan sir, that I will aid in returnin' this place to its badass glory, and get your princess out of that castle and back to you."

'Please; she's a queen and she knows it.' "Goddamn, Eugene," Negan rose with a laugh, moving to clap a heavy hand on his scientist's shoulder. "How does it feel to be the second-most important person here? How does it feel to save these good people?"

"It feels great." Maybe letting the old mullet in on his secrets wasn't the worst thing in the world.

"Well, you seem to be doing alright; aside from your injuries and some malnutrition," Sidiq let go of Delle's wrist after examining her as much as she'd let him. "Getting more food into you should be the first step."

"Sidiq, in case you haven't caught on, I'm kind of public enemy numero uno around here," she rolled her eyes and gestured to the door, on the other side of which she was certain Michonne still waited. "I've been livin' off a slice of bread a day for a month now; its a goddamn feat that I'm holding a baby in at all." Really, what were her odds?
He shifted nervously, glancing to the floor. "I-I suppose that's true... some people are just lucky, I guess." *Right! Pregnant in the apocalypse and raising a screaming infant around hungry corpses! Lucky lucky lucky!*

She sighed and shook her head, cradling her midsection with her arm all the same. "So Carl found you out there, huh?"

This, Sidiq seemed more comfortable with. "Yes," he said with a warmth he previously seemed shy about. "He brought me food a few days ago; after his dad shot at me," she smirked - Rick couldn't make a good impression on anyone. "And he brought me in today, after helping me give mercy to some lost souls."

She gave him an exasperated expression; lost souls? Really? "Altruistic little bastard, isn't he?" She remarked. Carl had a knack, it seemed, for saving the close-to-death.


A knock at the door resounded seconds later, the teen of the hour letting himself in. He'd changed into cleaner clothes, but looked worried. "Daryl is back," he said hurriedly. "Michonne went to talk to him."

'Fucking fuck.' Delle couldn't catch a break no matter what she tried. She'd immediately tried to convince Michonne the baby wasn't Negan's once the secret was out, but of course she didn't believe her; that life blossoming inside of Delle was Negan's spawn, through and through. She beseeched her not to tell anyone either, let her and her child live - a surprisingly motherly act, now that she thought of it - but all Michonne could see was the possibility of a legacy under Negan's reign.

"I'm not about to kill an expecting mom," Michonne had said, something wistful in her tone. "But this... this changes things."

Now, with Daryl and his crusade to end Negan and everything associated with him back, it seemed this was the change she'd meant.

"Guess you won't have to play midwife for me, Sidiq," Delle muttered bitterly, staring from a window at the falling night. "How're you at diggin' graves?" 'Please, they'll just burn your bodies - grave is too good for you.' Her conscience bit down hard on her wounded pride.

"I won't let that happen," Carl said firmly. The boy had really come into his own. "If they really think that killing a pregnant woman is the way to peace then we're no better than the Saviors," Delle cleared her throat. "No offense."

"Some taken," she mumbled pointedly. "Thanks for stickin' up for me, kiddo, but Daryl's kind of got it out for me and all things Negan. Once he catches wind of this," she placed her hand flat on her stomach. "I'm dead as a door nail."

Carl's fists clenched up; he had not gone through the effort of saving her just so Daryl could execute her the first chance he got. He still wasn't completely sure why he'd saved her, but it wasn't for her to die like that. "I'm going to talk to them," he muttered, giving Delle a long look. "They aren't gonna kill you."

Sidiq made the wise choice to go with him; Delle thought about making a break for it until she heard
the lock engage on the other side of the door. She sighed and sat, running her hands through her hair; she could be dead within the hour, could be running for her life, and all she wanted was Negan. She wished she could sink herself into those warm and welcome arms, the ones that had held her in her sparse vulnerable moments, even if for a moment. Long enough to retrieve a little love, feel a little strength where hers was starting to wane. 'I need you, you fucking geezer,' she thought to herself, nervously fussing with her fingers. 'Gotta tell you about your kid at least.' Despite everything around her - the enemies plotting her and his deaths, the all out war they were living in, the massive armies of corpses at arm's length - she let herself dream a misbegotten fantasy, pretend life was normal again. In that little daydream they were happy. He was hers. Their baby was safe. 'Wishful fucking thinking.'

On the street below, Sidiq waited while Carl was catching up with Michonne as Daryl began guiding the untrained Alexandrians into waiting vehicles. "What's going on?" He prompted, catching her attention.

"The Saviors got out," her voice was strained, equal parts exhausted and terrified. That war wasn't good for anyone. "We aren't sure how but they made it out. Daryl thinks they're on their way here." Tara and Rosita came running by, carting supplies off for safer destinations.

It was by no means a healthy situation. Negan and his men would be livid, and would no doubt take it out on them; the fact that Delle was there was perhaps the only chance they had at survival.

"C'mon kid, we gotta go," Daryl's raspy twang buzzed in his ears as he watched his father's right hand man board his motorcycle, kicking it into gear. "Get our people up to Hilltop, keep 'em safe til we can deal with the Saviors."

"What about Delle?" The minute he spit it out he knew he shouldn't have asked. Daryl's expression darkened, revving his engines.

"She ain't our people," he growled out, cold as ice. "Jus' put her out o' her misery n' get it over with. She's dyin' anyway." He rode ahead through an emergency back gate; and it dawned on Carl.

Michonne had lied to Daryl.

Carl's eye found hers, shocked and intrigued. "I told him what Rick thought," she spoke in barely a whisper; nobody else could know. "He thought her organs were starting to shut down. I told him the same."

"W-why?" Carl wasn't complaining, but he was confused.

"She's the last card we have to play," she was thinking logically, rationally; the Saviors had survived an ambush and massive attack head on. Negan was furious, without any doubt, but if they gave back his darling... with an added bonus? "She could be the one thing standing between us and getting everyone killed."

Carl was about to say more; but an all too familiar voice filled the air via speakers. Delle heard it too, and her heart soared.

"You may be wondering why the hell your lookouts didn't sound the alarm," Negan's voice boomed via microphone across Alexandria like rolling thunder; Delle plastered her hands to the window pane, trying to see if she could spot him. "See, we are polite. I mean, I don't know when they're gonna wake up from that kinda shot, but they should wake up. So let's just cut through the cow shit -
- you lose. So you're gonna line up in front of your little houses, and you're gonna work up some apologies, and then the person with the lamest one is gonna get killed. Then I kill Rick in front of everybody, and we move on," there was a long pause that hung heavy in the air, all important and begging everyone's attention. "You got three minutes before we start bombing the shit out of you, fuckfaces! Show up or shove out!"

Negan was giddy and grinning on the other side of the gates; one of his greatest strengths was whipping people into shape at alarming speeds. With Eugene's little scheme and a brief stop at a weapons cache, his faithful men were readily armed and raring to kill. As smug as he felt, a part of him just wanted to concentrate the grenade launchers on the iron wrought gate, break in through and fetch his girl - that would be his greater goal that night, to bring her home safely - but Alexandria needed punishment, first. They had to know what they did.

"Two minutes, people! Dig deep. I want these apologies to be memorable. Bonus points for creativity - work up a poem, sing a song. I love that shit," his laughter shook in the ears of all those present. "Get a move on, folks! I got a date to get to."

'Oh shit.' Carl's blood went cold at that; Negan had found out Delle was there, and worse, she was being held chained up despite her wounds. To Negan she'd look like a P.O.W, and he'd want equal payment for her suffering; but what would be consider equal when he thought the world of her? The Alexandrian citizens were terrified now, everything running amok as frenzied families tried to figure out what to do. Thankfully, Carl had some thoughts.

"Michonne," he put on his best impression of his father's deep, authoritative tone. "We have to make it look like you're runnin' out the back; if we can get you to the woods, halfway to the quarry, they might miss you all entirely."

"What do you mean, 'you'?" She narrowed her eyes. "You're coming with us, Carl."

"I'm going to stay," he could see the fear in her face. "To try and talk to him. We have Delle; I don't think he'll really attack if he doesn't know where exactly she is."

"We could take her with us," she suggested hurriedly. "Once we're far enough away, we could get an exchange going--"

"She's in no health to do that and you know it," he gave the hardest look he could manage with one eye. "This is my show, Michonne; my plan. I need you to do it, I need you to keep everyone safe."

"Carl--"

"I'll join you when I can!" He went barreling off for the gates; he had to at least try with Negan.

"Okeydokey. Brought this on yourself, Rick," Negan had no idea Rick still hadn't come back; neither man had any idea what was living inside Delle yet. "See, was willing to work with you. All you had to do was follow a few very simple rules. And you, being the monumental asscrack that you are, spit that right back in my face! Stole my little maniac from me! Now -- Well, now I see that you got to go. Scorched earth, you dick!"

"He's not home!" Carl popped up onto the lookout tower like a gopher out of its burrow; though he was decidedly more serious.

"Oh-ho-holy shit! Everybody hold your fire. It's Carl," he grinned up at the boy - enemy though he
was, he'd made himself a Savior when he'd pulled Delle from death. Couldn't avoid that. "Look at you. Answering the door like a big boy. I am so proud. Daddy's not home, huh? Well, I guess he's gonna get back to a big old smoky surprise."

"There's families in here, Negan," Carl was trying to buy time, enough the others could get away. He was fairly certain the man wouldn't kill him; he liked him too much. "Kids," your own, for example. "My little sister."

"Well, that shit just breaks my heart," Negan drawled, a hand on his chest. "There's kids at the Sanctuary. You must've seen 'em - and moreover I know you got somebody of mine inside there, and you're not lettin' her leave," he threw an arm out. "And I am damn certain my little lady wants to come on home to daddy."

The concept still had him shuddering, but Carl wasn't about to tell him he'd earned that title; it wasn't his place to spill that. "She was hurt; she couldn't have made that journey if she tried."

"And nobody had the goddamn time to drop her off, get in touch with us? I know you got one of our radios," he found his anger burning in him, wilder than it had in years. 'Focus.' "No, you let her be scared, be hurt all by her lonesome, when she should have been home with me. Who knows, a little fuckin' forethought and maybe all this shit could've been avoided," he narrowed his eyes, cheek twitching in anger. "Hindsight is twenty-twenty I guess."

Negan had taken the line of thought Carl worried about; he saw they took her prisoner, not as a patient, and he had never seemed more vicious. "I can get you to her now; this doesn't have to happen," Carl was almost begging now. "There's someth--"

"Oh this is happening!" Negan roared into the microphone in his hand. "See, your dad had it that I died, He gave my people a choice. Not me - didn't even have the goddamn courtesy to tell me my girl was still breathin'. Now we're gonna need a new understanding. Apologies, punish--"

"Kill me, then!" It was a Hail Mary for the ages; Carl was hoping he wouldn't call his bluff, but if it truly meant his people - maybe even his father - would be safe... Carl would bite the bullet. Or bat, as it were.

"What did you say?" Negan paused; he didn't want to kill this kid - now that he knew what he'd done - but goddamn if that wasn't a fitting punishment.

"Kill me," Carl repeated. "If me dying could stop this, if it can make things different -- for us, for you, for all those other kids -- it'd be worth it. I mean, was this the plan? Was it supposed to be this way? Is this who you wanted to be?" He watched as Negan's arms dropped to his sides, legitimately baffled. "Is this the man Delle loves?"

The screech of tires and the roar of engines caused a stir; the other residents of Alexandria were making a break for it - likely taking his precious girl with them. Negan glanced away, just long enough for Carl to drop from the watch tower, running himself. "Son of a bitch, Carl! Was that just a play?! I thought we were havin' a moment, you little asshole! Bombs away!"

The grenades fell over the walls, setting blazes left and right in the structures and lands nearest to them; Delle watched from Rick's safe distanced house as blooms of fire and explosions engulfed much of the small community. It was monstrous and a required evil all at once. But she knew he was there; in the face everything Rick and Maggie and Ezekiel threw at him, he was still kicking, and
he'd come for her. Now he just had to get there. Her eyes tore around the room, Carl's she suspected, and settled on a sleeping bag. It would do. She balled it around her healthy fist, and with all the strength she had she punch a hole through a wide window. Not huge, but enough to shout through.

"Negan!" Her voice was weaker too, but she cranked herself to her highest volume, screaming into the night. "Negan, I'm here!! Get your hands off your dick and find me!! Negan! Negan!"

As luck had it, he heard her loud and clear.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for the well wishes my loves ♡ feeling alright, writing lots!!

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As he strolled through the gates of Alexandria, he heard her. That voice - somewhat hollowed, god knows what they had been doing to her while captive - carried to him on the cold night air like a blaring siren, directing him to where he had to go.

"Kid's still gotta be here. All those grenades, he sure didn't get far. Search the place. Find him, tie him up, don't kill him," he still owed the boy a life. "Blow up every other house. I'm gonna go to Rick's," he was already marching down the rows of houses, half of which would soon become smoldering wreckage. "Think he's hidin' something of mine there."

It was maybe a ten minute walk from the gates to Rick's property; but it felt like the longest walk in his life. The intermittent explosions masked her voice some, but he had pinpointed her quickly; she was definitely there. Had Rick kept her that close? Had he hurt her? Had he... no. Rick was a douchebag of intense proportions, but he wasn't a mindless monster. The closer he got, he could swear he could almost feel her, his hair standing on end like she was giving off some electrical current; she'd all but come back from the dead, and she was waiting for him. He'd come for her. Nothing was going to keep him away. Not this time.

He crossed the threshold of Rick's house; her screams were that much more apparent inside. 'I'm comin' for you, sweetheart,' he told himself as he strode the floor plan, taking the staircase two at a time. His name was clear in her voice, as he paused before a door he knew lead to Carl's room. He tried the knob, locked, and the screams stopped; he knew she wasn't scared though. She knew it was him. She knew she was saved. He reared back, his boot coming in heavy contact with the door and busting the lock entirely; it swung loose, and there she was. He dropped Lucille.

She'd went and got thin; or more likely, they'd been feeding her the bare minimum to keep her going. Her eyes were wide, burgeoning with tears as she took careful, small steps towards him; a tiny part of her wasn't sure if he was real. He took longer strides, intent on remediying his loss as soon as he could. The moment his hand touched her cheek, the cool rush of relief washed across her body, the tears fell, and she crushed her body into his. 'I'm home.'

"Babygirl," he whispered hoarsely into her hair, drawing in her scent, his arms reminding him how she felt, how warm she was under her clothes. "I'm so sorry."

She knew he was apologizing for leaving her for a month, for thinking she was dead - she wondered who had told him she wasn't - but she didn't care. He'd come, and that was what mattered. "It's okay, Negan," she leaned her chin against his sternum, staring straight up through bleary eyes. "You're here. You came back for me."

How had he been rewarded twice now? What had he done to deserve her returning to his life all over again, once just waltzing into his home, and now this? Resurrected from his thoughts, flesh made whole again - she was more than he'd ever earned, and yet still she was his. "I should've come sooner," his voice cracked unbecomingly, but he didn't mind, not around her. "I can't believe I thought they'd killed you-- you, of all people."

"They did have a tiger," she chuckled, suddenly self conscious of the jagged scarring that crossed her
shoulder. What would he say when he saw them? 'Christ, what's he gonna say about the fucking baby?' "But it'll take more than that to bring me down."

"That's my girl," he cupped her cheeks in his hands and brought his lips to meet her own; she welcomed him willingly, casting her good arm around his neck as she melted into his touch, his kiss. He tasted so good, like she never wanted to pull away, like no amount of kisses would ever be enough. His nose brushed hers and his eyes opened, overcome with need; but even he could realize it wasn't the right time for that. He settled on holding her for as long as he could, running his fingers through her hair, coating her face in kisses. "Fuck I missed you so bad, baby. Broke my heart all over again."

"Missed you too, so much," she cupped the back of his head to bring him into another kiss, that warm old leather feeling like nostalgia against her. "I love you, Negan."

He broke out the stupidest grin of his life; who knew all it took was being mauled by a jungle cat to bring a girl around? "I love you too, babygirl," he resisted the urge to show her how much with his body, merely stroking her cheeks with his thumbs. "Glad I finally won you over."

"You were bound to wear me down eventually," she murmured; she contemplated telling him then and there of the life they'd made, but she felt it better to wait. "Can we go home? I'm starving and I miss our bed."

"Our bed!" He was gleeful, riding an incredible, bright-eyed high; but he still had a certain someone he had to deal with. "Soon baby," he cooed, smoothing her hair with his gloveless palm. "We'll get you properly situated real soon; but I gotta deal with Rick before we can go anywhere. I'm gonna slice him into a different piece for every fuckin' day he kept you from me, then I'm gonna feed every chunk back to him."

As touched as she was he would kill for her, the level of gore and excessive violence he was vying for left a cold stone in her belly; it wasn't the early days of motherhood, it was her way. Kill quickly, get shit done. Rick being mutilated for her sake didn't do anything but take up time. Even if it would make them both feel better.

"There will be other days to kill Rick Grimes," she caught his cheek with her healthy hand, keeping those dark eyes on hers. "Please Negan, I want to go home."

He was close to giving in; to letting Rick live another night on earth if it meant she'd be happier for it. He almost said so; when the sound of the front door swinging open caused both of their breaths to catch. Rick had come home.

"Wait here." Negan husked almost silently, retrieving Lucille and moving like a ghost down the stairs to confront the Alexandrian leader. Like hell Delle was just going to wait there like some damsel in distress! No matter the condition she'd fight along side him; she just didn't have much to fight with.

"Carl?" Rick's drawl was inquisitive, confused as he stepped through the house silently, gun drawn and ready to kill. It sounded as though he hadn't found the boy either. "Michonne? You here?"

"Welcome back!" Negan's voice rang through the darkness as he brought Lucille down on Rick's outstretched arms; the gun was knocked from his grip, and he was too preoccupied with Negan's swinging to fetch it. "Pretty little thing you're keepin' upstairs! What's her name?" He swung again, Rick narrowly escaping with his head as Lucille cracked a door frame into splinters. "Thought you'd
just hold her hostage? What, were you gonna do, parade her out to watch me die? That shit's not funny!" He tracked him into the night darkened dining room, watching as Rick scrambled to achieve his bearings. "I don't plan to do this now, Rick; fuckin' everybody is gonna watch you die in the slowest, grisliest, most fucked deserving way possible!" Rick managed a heavy tackle against Negan's middle, sending him into a wall.

"Don't you ever shut the hell up?" Rick gasped, sweat dripping through his shirt as Lucille cracked across his shoulder blades.

"Nope!" Negan stalked him like a hungry animal, ready to taste his blood. Rick paid him in a heavy punch, square across the jaw; he teetered but didn't fall. "Your own son saved my girl! How fucked up is that!?" His voice grew cold, meaner if possible. "He'd rather save the enemy than help his daddy get a win. He knows what the righteous side looks like," Rick threw a chair; it missed. "And it's holdin' a baseball bat."

Rick roared as he went in for another rush, knocking his opponent to the floor to land a few strong jabs; Negan was bigger, but with the wiry Alexandrian holding him down and beating him he was more than a little rattled. Rick reared back, gearing up to send a hard hit into his temple; only to be kicked right in the teeth by Delle's bare heel.

"You can kindly fuck right off, Rick!" She braced against a wall - her body wasn't made to withstand fights yet - but she still snarled like a beast, giving Negan ample time to haul himself up. "You're gettin' what's owed."

"You should've killed you when I had the chance--!" Rick lunged and grabbed a tight hold of Delle's wrist on her broken side, forcing a yelp of pain; Negan's head spun as he felt Lucille's end come in contact with Rick's own shoulder. He had to rely on feeling; all he saw was red.

"Don't you touch her!" He growled, putting himself between the two; this time he threw his body into Rick's, the force enough to send the enemy careening through a window, glass coating the hardwood flooring. His breath came in pants as he watched Rick draw himself from a crawl to a run, squirreling away into the fire, smoke and darkness. 'I'll get that bastard if it's the last thing I do - thinks he can lay hands on my babygirl--'

"Negan," he felt her arms encircle his waist, his fury cooling instantaneously. Her hands felt amazing against his chest. "Negan, let's go."

"He's gettin' away," he hissed, one of his wide hands enclosing around hers. He'd never let them go too far from his reach again. "I have to--"

"Rick deserves to die in broad daylight; he deserves to watch as he fails all his friends and family under the sun," she reasoned, her arms tightening around him. "Let him die another day. Let's go home."

Good god it was all he wanted; he wanted to sweep her up - though she'd never let him - drive straight back to Sanctuary, take her back to their sheets and never let her out of his sight again. He wanted that peace, that tranquility; after a month without her, he felt they'd both earned it.

"Okay, baby," he whispered, turning in her arms and threading his arm around her shoulders. "Get you some real R and R, bit of food in ya."

'Good lord, food sounds like heaven.' She tugged on Negan's sleeve as they moved to leave, Saviors
still crawling across the Alexandria grounds. "Negan, wait," she paused. "We need to go to their weapons cache; I need Fang--" she was ashamed it was the first time she'd thought of her precious blade since capture.

"We'll find him, sweetheart," Negan promised, keeping her tight to his side as he strolled to his convoy of trucks. "I'm gonna get to lookin' for Fang, can you stay here for me?" He'd stopped at a massive transport truck, hoisting her up onto the safety step.

Her grip on him immediately clenched. "I-I don't want you to go anywhere," her mind flew to his seed in her belly. "There's things we have to talk about--"

"We're gonna have ourselves a good talk, sweetie; heart to heart, pour out our guts chat. But I gotta get shit done here, first," he opened the door at her back, giving her an expectant gaze. "Hop in, babygirl. Rest those gorgeous eyes; I'll have your Fang back to you in a flash."

She swallowed, worry written all over her face. Yes it was true, she was hardly in premium health, but she didn't want to lose sight of him for a second. But that cushy passenger's seat was looking so inviting, and her limbs and lids suddenly felt heavier than she'd realized. "You'll... you'll be right back."

"Abso-fucking-lutely, baby," he swore with his hand over his heart. "I'll get your Fang, we'll get you home and up to speed." He still had to tell her about his loose lips.

She chewed at her lip, finally releasing his collar. "Alright," she pulled herself up by her good arm - Negan had noticed her favoring one side - and curled into the seat. "Get back fast. I'm starving."

"I will. Gonna get your Fang and get the fuck out of Dodge."

Thank goodness her Fang was actually in the weapons cache when his men found it. He was slung against a wall, still in his holster, seemingly waiting for someone to come and save him too. Negan's grin returned as he plucked the machete from its place, grasping around the sheath. "She's gonna be pleased as punch he's actually here," He thought to himself, making his way back to the convoy. 'Surprised these Alexandrians didn't try to melt him down or some shit.'

"Negan, sir!" His attention was piqued by Arat, appearing with a look of pride on her face. "We got him."

Sure enough, the had; tied and bound just before the Alexandrian gates, was kneeling Carl Grimes. He looked a little worse for wear, having landed on his arm on the way down from the watch tower, but mostly he looked as obstinate as ever.

"Well hey there Carl!" His body bobbed on one of his legs as he greeted the incapacitated youth. "Found that little present you were hidin' for me at your house! She's just beautiful, can't wait to play with her!" He crouched to meet his singular gaze, Lucille's hilt tilting his head up to see his smugness.

"What are you gonna do with me?" The kid demanded; no beating around the bush for Carl Grimes.

Negan's smile curled into something wicked slowly; he had no intention hurting the boy, not in the slightest. His father, on the other hand, was in for a world of pain. "Time will tell, kid. Can't wait to see how shit plays out for you." He clapped a hand to his arm, giving Arat and her subordinates the order to load him up; Carl Grimes would be a Savior yet.
Delle was fast asleep in the cab of the truck when he returned. He placed Fang in her lap and repositioned her head into his own; he had his family back, and felt on top of the world.

He had no idea how large his family was growing.

Chapter End Notes

Reunited and it feels so good ♡

Big things on the horizon :3
(If it wasn't clear before, I avoided Carl getting bit. Well see how long I let him live.)

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"Baby," Delle resisted waking; she hadn't slept so soundly in ages, and she wasn't looking to let go of that. "Baby wake up for me; we've got some things to discuss."

With heavy eyes she tilted her head upward, Negan's big brown eyes staring down at her with love and... was that guilt? 'Shit, who did he go fucking while he thought I was dead?' She yawned and wriggled, glancing down with joy and surprise; her Fang was safely wrapped up in her arms like a lethal teddy bear. "You got him back." She mumbled through sleep, rubbing her eyes.

"Said I would, didn't I?" He snickered, offering a helpful hand to prop her up in her seat. The roads, though dark, were beginning to look familiar; they couldn't be far from Sanctuary. "We uh... we need to talk about a few things before we get back."

"Fuck, don't tell me you went n' got yourself a new harem in my absence," she laughed, though felt a little chill when he didn't answer right away. "Oh goddamn it you did, didn't you?"

"No, I fuckin' didn't," he barked back, knitting his brows at her. "I was a very faithful widower, thank you. I just... need to get you up to speed on what we're doing."

"Well shit, don't scare me like that," she cradled Fang in her arms and cozied up against Negan's side; he was on her left and it didn't sting to press into him. "Give me the lay of the land, boss-man."

His Adam's apple bobbed as he gulped. 'Here goes.' "The Prick and his gang did a pretty bad number on the Sanctuary," he explained first; start with the easy stuff then work up to the worst of it. "Lost a good chunk of workers; and Saviors. They took Simon's outpost again."

Her head swiveled up fast, eyes wide with concern. "Simon? Is he-- he's not--"

"Simon's just fine," the annoyance in his tone was palpable; it bothered him she still cared about her former fuck buddy at all. "He was at Sanctuary when shit went down; put all his eggs in Gregory's shit basket and we paid for it."

"I could've told you any deal with that cockgoblin was gonna go south," she rolled her eyes, though couldn't have been happier for her current company. "So they fucked you pretty hard, huh?"

"Right up the ass," he nodded; though fully prepared to give it back to them tenfold. "Got stuck in a trailer with that creepy-ass priest."

"Gabriel?" She raised a brow. "Did he try to save your soul? Let go and let God?"

He thought back to his impromptu confession, all he'd admitted in wishing he'd never let her leave in the first place. 'But she doesn't need to hear all that.' "He told me you were alive," there was a tenderness in his tone now, miraculous happiness. "So he may as well have."

She smiled softly, nuzzling into his shoulder and drowning in his smell; blood, leather, soap, oil. Good lord she had missed that smell like nothing else. She could breathe it like air. "Glad somebody
gave you some direction on that - didn't want to go waitin' back there forever." 'Or at least until I started to show.' Her hand spread across her stomach, under Fang where Negan couldn't see. She wanted to wait til they were home; truly feeling 100 percent safe again, before she let him in on the big news. But he had plenty more to tell her first.

"We rounded up Carl, back at Alexandria," he explained, turning the truck onto a new road; not long now. "Takin' him back with us."

"What?" She blinked, honestly surprised. "The kid's not done anything to hurt us, Negan, why take him--"

"Because he hasn't done anything to hurt us," it was a reasonable explanation; the son of the man who wanted Negan's head on a platter had been inexplicably peaceful. "I mean the kid saved you for Christ's sake; if that ain't the makings of a model Savior I don't know what is."

She stared at him, baffled by his grandeur; Negan was strong and undeniably convincing, but turning Carl Grimes against his father? Walking on water would be simpler. "He's not gonna turn on his daddy; the kid wants a peaceful end to all this. End the bloodshed, give-peace-a-chance and all that idealistic bullshit."

"I'll deal with father Grimes," he drawled in total confidence. "By the time Carl sees the light and joins our ranks, Rick and his crew will be long gone and pushin' up daisies."

"He won't be too thrilled with that either, pops," she ran her left hand along his pant covered leg; she'd touch every inch she could when he gave her the chance. "Dream big, I guess."

"I'll make these dreams come true, sweetheart," he winked down at her, enjoying the blush it caused on her skin. He couldn't wait to touch that skin. "There's uh... there's somethin' else, too..."

"You sound nervous," she murmured, closing her eyes as her head plopped onto his shoulder. "I'm sure you can't have fucked up that badly." This is Negan we're talking about - he's an expert fuck up."

"Ahuh," he cleared his throat, preparing for her to pull away, hit him, try to tuck and roll out of the cab. "Well... well I thought you were dead. I was goddamn heartbroken, baby; hadn't felt so torn up since... since the first time."

She took his hand and squeezed it tightly, the leather flexing around her fingers; she'd hurt him again, and she hadn't even meant to. She cursed Rick for even letting him think she wasn't out there missing him. "I'm okay though, Negan. I'm right here; can't you feel me?" Her fingers clenched between his, holding on tight. It was as strong as she could manage, but he felt it all the same. It put an idea in her head; one she could execute in the privacy of the cab at the head of the convoy. She hoisted her fatigued body to her knees and let her soft lips drift across his neck, light kisses and licks setting a fiery dread in his belly. "Can you feel this?" She whispered, drawing the zipper of his jacket down a few inches, sliding her hand in to study the rise and fall of his chest. "Feel me?"

'Ooh I do, you feel damn good baby.' His eyes nearly rolled back and almost pushed them off the road. In different circumstances he would've pulled the truck aside, yanked down those stretchy leggings and fucked her with all the yearning and longing he'd built up for the past month; but she needed to know what he'd done before they got back. He wouldn't have her walking in blind.

"Of course I feel you babygirl," she ghosted her teeth over his earlobe and he groaned; the playful
She paused, pulling her head back slightly; his face was a mask of guilt now. "Wait, what?"

"I... I told a couple folks about us," her eyes grew wide as she pulled further away, leaning back onto her calves. "All about us..."

She could feel her blood begin to bubble, that rage that fueled her every move beginning to kick into gear. "...and who the fuck did you tell all about us, Negan?"

"Eugene... and Simon."

Her healthy hand flew out and smacked the side of his head, before both hands balled into fists and pummeled painlessly at his shoulder. "You told FUCKING SIMON!?? If anyone was within 10 feet of the truck they'd have heard her screech. "What the flying fuck is wrong with you!?"

"You were dead!! He raised his right arm to stave off her blows, hold her back as she scratched at his leather. "I was feelin' alot of shit - I'm an emotional man, Delle! What was I supposed to do!?"

"You take that shit to your fucking grave!!" She offered in response, trying to extend her arm long enough to scrape at his face; she barely reached his shoulder. "You don't go blabbing like everybody's your fuckin' therapist!! You don't just give up!"

"You were attacked by a fucking jungle cat!!" He roared, his hand pressed to her face to keep her still. "I saw you turn into a fountain of fucking blood! I wasn't exactly hopeful!"

"It wasn't that bad, don't be such a fuckin' baby!" She lied; it was an awful feeling, something she felt still. Her right arm would never work quite right again, she understood that on some level; and she had every right to be furious. "He's gonna fuckin' kill me! I can't go back there!"

"Simon's not gonna lay a fuckin' finger on you," he growled out an oath, grabbing her left hand. "He can't do shit to you; I will keep you safe. Nobody is goin' to hurt you."

"Everyone will be trying to!" Her arms crossed over her stomach; Negan assumed his news had made her nauseous. "Holy fuck Negan; everyone is gonna know and I'll have a target painted on my back!"

He swallowed, having to give in to the truth of that. Being involved with him had already got her captured by the Alexandrians; what chances would the enemies within his walls take to get at her? "We... we could keep you guarded for awhile," he suggested. It was basically caging - the very thing she hadn't wanted, had been adamantly against since day one - but it would keep her safe. He had to keep her safe. "Just til we've got the militia dealt with and Si simmers down."

"'He's trying to fucking bench me!! This dickwad thinks he can throw me in a tower and play princess with me he's got another thing coming--'"

"'What about the baby?'

Her body went cold and she bit at her lip, suddenly all too aware it wasn't just herself she had to protect anymore. Negan didn't even know yet, but their sudden addition would make him even more wary and protective, she was sure of that. Maybe she could get ahead of that if she played along.
"...until Si simmers down." She repeated with a nod, her eyes glued to the road before them; she could see Sanctuary's tall building now and all she wanted was to collapse into black sheets.

He was struck by her willingness to comply - normally convincing Delle of anything was like pulling teeth - yet she'd folded so easily. He wondered if it was because of the injury; he'd noticed how difficult it had been for her to move her right arm, maybe she wasn't as confident walking into a fight. Yes, that had to be it; what else could it be?

"Alright," he said softly, letting his arm drop back to his side, watching her carefully. "Things will turn out peachy, baby; don't you worry. I've got shit handled."

"Sure," she murmured, giving him a light, gentle shove. "I'm still fucking pissed at you."

"That's fine," he acquiesced with a chuckle, letting his wide hand squeeze her knee. "You be as pissed off as you want to be."

'Oh plan to!' Her rage was calmer now, but still present. It was mixing with her empty stomach and exhaustion, not to mention her earlier loving on his neck had set a fire in her core that she desperately needed extinguished. 'I wonder if I could get him to fuck me while I eat something...' But that wasn't as pressing as the information she had to share. She still had intel on Dwight. "I've got some news of my own, pops."

"Go on," he replied, rolling his wrist. "Whatever you got can only help at this point."

"It's about Dwight," she wasn't going to go fussing with words here; he was cavorting with the enemy, and she'd make sure he'd pay for every life, every tiger scratch he'd caused. "He's playin' both teams. Sold you out before the Sasha incident." How did that feel so long ago already?

Negan's knuckles went white on the steering wheel, a thick vein in his neck pulsing in fury. "That two faced little ass kisser," he ground his teeth together, imagining melting the rest of Dwight's flesh to match his face. "Should've fuckin' figured; turncoats everywhere I look!" His hand smacked the dashboard, trying to ease his pent up anger.

"Not in here," she mumbled, stroking his leg. "Never me."

It soothed him, but not by much. "I'm gonna rip that little bastard in two," he mused, one of his legs beginning to bounce against the floor in impatience. "Stick him on the fuckin' fence, show everyone what selling me out will get you."

'That's one way of doin' things.' "Let him stew awhile, boss. What more damage can he do now that you know the truth?" She felt a combination of relief and terror wash over her as they rolled through the gates of Sanctuary, aching to go back to sleep, safe in his arms; yet fat too wired to do so. They came to a stop and Negan grabbed Lucille, only for Delle to catch his wrist. "What are you gonna do with the kid?"

He gave her a sympathetic look and cupped her cheek; his little firecracker had developed a soft spot for the boy. He couldn't blame her, he had saved her life after all; but he wasn't going to give him free run of the Sanctuary either.

"How 'bout I let him stay in your old room?" Negan offered. "I'll keep a couple guys back to guard the door, but he'll be comfortable. It ain't a cell, anyway."
She smiled sweetly - when did she do anything sweetly? - and gave an approving nod. She swept up Fang and draped him over her left shoulder, wriggling out of the passenger side. The sky was still dark overhead, but the world was still buzzing with life; those coming back from Alexandria, those providing more fortifications to the walls. Everything needed to be better than top notch to keep those alive inside safe. 'I need to be that, too,' she told herself, glancing to her stomach. 'Fuck, what'd I get myself into?'

"Get the hell off me!" Her eyes searched and found a defiant Carl, struggling against the grip of his captors; Arat looking annoyed, Gary looking amused. Negan was already making his way to the scene, and Delle did the same.

"Now now, Carl," Negan tutted, tapping Lucille on his shoulder. "That's no way to talk to your hosts! What the hell is your daddy teachin' you?"

"He's gonna lose his shit, Negan," Carl's eye was angry but he was still trying to be reasonable. "Keeping me hostage is just gonna get people hurt."

"You mean like how you kept me hostage?" Delle added, crossing her arms with a little difficulty. "Seems Rick was really just askin' for this to happen."

"Delle please, you were hurt, you know--"

"I was hurt and your daddy still strapped me down to a bed for a month!" She growled back. "But don't you worry Carl; you'll have plenty cozy digs while you're here. No handcuffs required."

Negan gave the order to take him to Delle's room; that earned a perplexed look from both Arat and Gary, but they both knew better than to question him. "Delle you don't need to do this!" Carl yelled as they dragged him off. "We can still save them! Please!"

"That is one optimistic little brat there," Negan chuckled; at some point his hand slid down to her hip, massaging the flesh beneath her clothes. "Let's get you up to bed, babygirl; its been too long since I've seen that fine ass body on my sheets."

God it felt good to be home.

Chapter End Notes

Mostly just yelling and showboating ;)  
Hope the story is still interesting for everyone!♡♡♡♡ your reviews and comments mean the world to me, so thank you for keeping in touch :D

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Chapter 101

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Before...

How had she not seen it? Figured it out?

The coincidences seemed to abound. A former student, beautiful, young; clearly a little wilder than the rest of the class. She must've stood out for a reason, there must've been something about her that had made him throw away their years of marriage.

Lucille was curled into the sofa in their living room; the same one they'd shared for countless mornings, watching movies together, even sex once or twice. Now it felt so expansive and incredibly empty, sat there alone. She took a swig of the vodka she'd purchased on the way home; Moscow mules be damned, she needed that numbness faster. It'd been weeks, and nothing was making it easier; she felt everything, every raw and open nerve, blatantly and painfully.

She was angry; he'd ruined everything they'd built together, with that little homewrecker at his beck and call. She tried to guess when the illicit affair had started; was it before that crazed man came into the bar to scream at Delle? It must have; if she was really enough to throw away his entire life for, it couldn't have been some one night stand. Love takes time, and he'd made time for it. Just not for his wife.

She was morose; their small house suddenly seemed massive, cold and empty. Negan had a personality that filled whatever space he took up, and it was a tangible change when he was gone. After spending so long in this place, it seemed as though the very lights dimmed without him there. She wished she could hate him - maybe a part of her did - but he still had her heart, just as much as he had when he'd first won it years before. She loved him in spite of everything that told her to stop. Oh how she wanted to stop.

She was in their bedroom - her bedroom, now - bottle in one hand, a picture frame in the other. Their wedding day; wearing white, she looked thrilled, a world of possibility and adventures with her husband ahead of her. He was smiling back at her, that natural warmth exuding through the old photo; had he been as happy as she had been? Did he see their future together as the exciting ride she did, or was it suddenly a slog the second he slid on that ring? She couldn't tell. He was smiling.

She was confused; had she driven him off? Was that what had happened? She didn't want to guess. She had so many questions, questions that would be answered if she just picked up his calls; but she knew what he was calling for, knew the papers he wanted her to sign. And she couldn't imagine doing that; none of it made any sense. They had been happy... hadn't they? They both had regular jobs, and though she was away often, they shared their bed with no fights, no yelling. Maybe she should've fought. Yelled. Maybe he'd still be there if she'd worked harder.

She was in their den; looking through their bookshelves. In his nearly twenty years at his job, he'd kept his yearbooks, and she was looking for her. She found her in the graduating class of 2006 - 'Oh god she's only 19!?-' her picture plain and simple in black and white. Even devoid of color, her bright eyes were startling and remarkable; she'd clearly come into the rest of her face around that age,
her plump lips beginning to compliment the angles of her cheekbones, her dark hair and brows wild and unruly but full of potential. Delle Cornish was always destined to be a beauty; but why did she have to be *his* beauty?

She tried to figure out if Delle had known; and if so, when and how much? She never struck her as stupid, she must've realized a man who never took her home, who she only met at motels has a life she never saw. Did she know her name? Did she know her face? When Lucille had first stepped into that bar, when she'd poured her heart out to her sympathetic ears, had she known exactly who she was? Did she laugh about it later, the old, infertile wife who didn't give her husband all that she could? She didn't want to believe that to be true of that kind girl; but it was a possibility. And it turned her stomach.

She wanted him back; that much was clear. Even with all the pain, how certain he was that what he felt for Delle was real, Lucille knew better. That young thing was a passing fancy, no more than a fling that lasted longer than it was supposed to. She didn't have their history, she hadn't worked and sweat and bled for their marriage like Lucille had; she was just a naive girl playing house. Not even playing house, just playing with her husband. What could she hope for from a relationship with a man more than twice her age? There was nothing there, there couldn't be.

She was just using him. Yes, that had to be it.

She was standing in their kitchen. This is where she was when she felt their last try slip away; the first few drops of blood hitting the tile floor on a cold midmorning. Was that what it was? That she could never give him the child they wished for; was he looking for some young slice who could pump out babies like nothing at all? Delle didn't strike her as the mothering kind, and at 19 she didn't seem in any hurry to take that on. How could he be so stupid? She prayed he'd at least had the presence of mind to use condoms, god knows what the little tart was carrying... disease or otherwise.

She felt guilty. As horrible as they'd both been to her, her heart still went out to the friendly bartender who'd nearly been assaulted weeks before. She'd been gentle, so understanding... how could it have been an act? What kind of selfish sociopath would do that? It was almost impossible for Lucille to wrap her mind around; yet whenever she would picture him kissing her, underneath his body in some passionate exchange that was meant to only be for their marriage, her blood would boil. Everything was ruined; all because of her.

She was in the guestroom. She couldn't sleep in their bed anymore. Everything hurt.

But she couldn't let go. She opened her eyes. The phone was ringing.

"Delle... what are you going to do?"

She looked up from the sofa of their little apartment, their monthly bills in her lap; they hadn't seen their father in months, but that wasn't too new for them. Fang was staring at her from his bedroom doorway, a strained sadness on his face.

"What do you mean?" She blinked, then glanced to the papers demanding payments before her. "What? The bills? I'll get things handled, kiddo; if anything I'll sell some plasma, or bone marrow, or eggs - I'm pretty healthy, I'm sure I'd pass--"
"With Coach, Delle," he elaborated, joining her on the couch. "I mean... he's left his wife."

"Sure did," she couldn't meet his eyes, pretending to fuss over the bills as the numbers jumbled in her head. "Not pleased with myself, here, but he can do what he wants."

"What is it you want?" He pressed, but was met with silence. "Delle, what do you want from him? He's no spring chicken anymore, what... what do you have to gain at this point?"

*Why do I need to be gaining anything?* She asked herself, almost hiding her face with the tenancy agreement; he pulled it out of her hands. "I don't know, okay?"

That was a lie. In the deepest recesses of her heart she knew what she wanted; it was just an impossibility. She felt ridiculous, being in love with a man so much older than her, with whom she shared such a complex, muddy history; yet she couldn't fight it back, had stopped fighting it a long time ago. She'd fantasized about him all to herself; but now that such a thing had come true, she found all the reasons why that couldn't be coming into bleak light.

"If you don't know then why did he leave her?" Fang was asking all the questions she'd done such a good job of avoiding. "There... he has to want something from you."

*I know he does, I just can't give it to him.* It was a wistful thought, but tragically true. "He left her because he didn't want to keep hurting her," there was some honesty in that. "We've both been downright despicable, he couldn't live with hurting her anymore."

"Then... then why not break things off with you?" She didn't let it show how horribly those words stung her; it was true that she was the other woman, but he had chosen her. This hadn't been an ultimatum, no last straw; he'd made his decision. "He had a whole life with her... he's just going to throw that away for you?"

"N-no," she stuttered, her eyes in her lap again. "Like I said, he didn't want to keep living a lie. He's happier single."

"He's not single!" Fang blurted out. "He's obsessed with you; can you say the same yourself?"

*Yes.* She admitted inwardly.

"Would you... would you marry him?"

Her eyes went wide as her head snapped up to stare at him. *Married?* That sham of an institution that, in her experience, only ever ended in hardship and legal proceedings? Nothing could be more repulsive. "No, I wouldn't--I don't- he just left his wife! He's not thinking of that!"

"But he is thinking of you," he pointed out. "He still wants his life, sis; but he wants it with you... would you give him that if he asked?"

She reached out and grabbed Fang's hand; she could understand his fears. They only had each other in the world; she wouldn't go running off with Negan if it meant hurting her beloved brother. As she had since he'd been born, she'd put his happiness above her own. "I'm not going to leave you, champ," she said softly, trying for her best loving-sibling smile. "I'd never do that."

He gave her a long look, something pained yet knowing, as if he had some secret she didn't know yet. "I love you, Delle," he replied, his warm brown eyes a little teary. "But he's had you doing
things you never thought you’d do... how long will it be before he wears you down?"

She made to respond, but found no sound from her lips; she went to squeeze his hand and felt nothing. His face, sad and soft, began to swim; slowly all she could see were the backs of her eyelids in the midst of waking up.

The apartment was dark; she'd fallen asleep while pouring over the bills, trying to stretch her singular salary across all their necessities that week. The whole conversation had been a dream; a war within herself over the questions she wouldn't ask while awake.

'Would you abandon your family for him?'

'Throw it all away, like he did for you?'

'How long can you keep this up? How long before he's fed up waiting and moves on?'

'He'll want everyone to know eventually, Delle; Negan can't keep things quiet forever.'

'Can you keep him entertained that long? Can you really offer him all that Lucille could?'

'When will your love stop being enough?'

These were difficult questions - easily seen why Delle was avoiding them - but now even her subconscious demanded answers. She wanted that life, she knew it, but how could she do that to Fang? How could she ask him to become a pariah along with her? She rubbed her face and yawned, finally tuning in to what had woken her up.

The phone was ringing.

Chapter End Notes

This was a challenging one to write; I personally haven't gone through what Lucille is going through, but I tried to go as realistic as possible.

I didn't even realize we're in the triple digits now! Thanks for sticking around :)

Like my stuff?? Leave me a comment! Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU! ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 102

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The walk - or more accurately, race - to Negan's chambers was agonizing; he surprised himself by not tearing off her clothes the second they entered the building. His restraint was evolving. The second they entered the room and he locked that door though, all bets were off.

"Fucking christ I need you, baby," he rasped, his hands gripping the bottom of her borrowed tunic. "Gotta get you out of these bullshit Alexandria clothes--"

"W-wait," she made him pause, an iron grip on his wrists; the scarring in her shoulder was advanced, and she wanted to prepare him for her weakened state. "I can't lift my arms normally, and...and my shoulder is pretty gnarly."

He paused, dropping his hands from her shirt to run his hands through her hair; he was looking forward to tusseling it with sex, but he didn't mind this hurdle. "Sweetheart, you could be flayed alive and still be a fuckin' vision; I'll be gentle with your arm," he pulled her close for a warm, open kiss, his tongue swirling hers and teeth nipping her lip. "But nothin' else."

She should've been weary, exhausted; but the prospect of rough sex with her man was far too enticing. After a month without him, she wanted his worst. "I'll hold you to that, coach," she purred, dragging her nails across his neck, forcing a growl. "Show me how you missed me."

Their mouths met again, equally aching and hungry this time; tongues and teeth teasing and claiming each other's own, her hands eagerly remembering his heat, shedding his leathers for him, studying the flex of his muscles underneath his soft skin. His own pulled her in tightly, taking over her movements enough to walk her backwards, eager to reach their bed. He offered a more chaste kiss for a moment before meeting her eyes, both sets hazy and lusting as he went to tug at her shirt; she nodded, and he was cautious in pulling the garment from her skin. She hadn't been kidding about her shoulder; the flesh was badly scarred, like layers glued haphazardly back together, silvery pink and not completely mended in deeper spots. It didn't matter though; it was still her, and thusly beautiful.

She caught him pausing, his long fingers tracing the injury. "It looks worse than it is," she said hastily. "I'm sure I'll get more movement back over time, it's just--" he shut her words off with a kiss, hard and commanding, as he pressed her back into the bed, his own body forming a cage over hers; the only cage she'd willingly be in.

"They're battle wounds, baby," he whispered against her lips; he was aware of the embarrassed blush on her cheeks when his head dipped, his mouth planting hot kisses against the lengths of healed flesh, his tongue tracing the rigid scarring. "My Delle went toe to toe with a tiger and lived to tell; you couldn't get any sexier if you tried."

She hated how her heart swelled with love at his gentle words - it made her feel like some fragile little ingenue - but that settled quickly as his path continued lower, his mouth oh so expertly toying with her breasts. She let loose a low purr and her body writhed as his lips closed snug around a nipple, rolling it with his tongue and suckling til he had her eyes rolling back; he performed the same act with its twin.
"Mmah, god, Negan..." was it the pregnancy hormones or the lack of stimulation that had every touch of his setting her on fire that night? He hadn't even tugged down her leggings but she could already feel them drenched, the squirm of her legs causing the softest rub against her sex; but she didn't want soft, she wanted him. "Please, please touch me."

"Never gonna stop touchin' you, baby," he hummed into her flesh, kisses painting her sternum, chest, collarbone. His hand came up between her legs, still clothed, and she felt his grin grace her skin as he rubbed from the outside, the slick evidence of his workings obvious and rewarding. "Holy fuck babygirl, you are soaked through... cuffed up for a month and they didn't even let you play with yourself; I bet you're just so sensitive."

He pressed his fingers up against her covered clit, and with the slightest caress her hips were bucking from the mattress, her groans filling his room, his ears, his heart. "Oh god Negan, please!!"

He smirked; even with their separation, teasing her was a much beloved pastime. "Please what, Delle? I won't know unless you tell me," he chuckled as his circles quickened, that little bundle of nerves a hard pearl underneath it's fabric prison. "Or beg me."

She grumbled and pulled at his hair, their eyes meeting over her bare skin; both were still steeped in lust, but he clearly held the upper hand. Cockiness and self assurance were plastered across his face, while anyone could see the blatant sexual starvation on hers. Any other night and she would've given him shit for it, bowled him over and fucked him mercilessly on his own shag carpet; but she needed to be in his control that dark, early morning. She needed to let herself go in the hands of the man she trusted; that night, she would bend.

"I want you to fuck me with your fingers, Negan," she whimpered, his hand sliding up to slide into her leggings; he lapped at her neck as his first finger slipped inside her entrance, hot, tight and waiting. "Ahh... I want you to make me come," she shuddered, wriggling beneath his hold as he added another, stroking her soaked walls while he thumbed her clit; he had her close already. "J-just like this... then... on your tongue," he raised his head and brows, grinning down at her; both fingers were massaging out of rhythm with the other, running along her most sensitive spot that had her nearly unable to speak. Nearly. "Then I want to come on that hot, thick cock of yours... think you can handle that?"

Even as he unraveled her at the seams, her words still carried bite; he adored that bite. "And then some, baby," he murmured, letting his digits slide in and out as if they were his cock; they didn't measure up, but he knew what she liked. "Bet this little pussy ached for me, didn't it? Probably kept all of Alexandria up some nights, moanin' for me."

"Can't help that I like your dick," her tongue graced her lips as a keening mewl left her mouth, fingers gripping the linens below her; he was outright fucking her with his hand now, thumb at a mashing pressure with her bud. She was right on that edge; she'd missed him more than she'd realized. "F-fuck that's good... ugh you cocky bastard."

He could feel her starting to clench; those sweet pink walls were contracting quickly around his practiced actions, her breathing was faster, and her eyes were adopting that glassy, hazy look he adored. 'Goddamn it she might make me come in my jeans.' "C'mon sweetheart, I know you're right on the edge," his voice was so low, so dark. "Show me how much you missed me."

Her own words parroted back, along with his savant-like handiwork finally shoved her past the point of no return. "O-oh Negan, yes, yes--fuck!" Her body locked up for a moment before falling into cascades of pleasure, emanating from her core as he lazily stroked her sex, his efforts nearly soaking
through to the bed itself. She raked her nails across his back, as much as she could, her eyes glued to his smug face as he felt her come. They only closed for a moment as her body went boneless, collapsing and heaving for air and twitching with aftershocks... then they snapped open as he freed her legs from their confines, stripping off his shirt and pants and taking a new spot; knees on the floor, pulling her hips to his greedy mouth. "O-off to the races, then?"

He smiled up at her, though was entranced by the view of her pussy; pink with need, puffy from his stimulation, glistening in the dull moonlight. She couldn't have been more appetizing. "I am just dyin' to fuck you til you pass out, Delle," he hummed, his tongue allowing a kitten lick against her oversensitive bud; she practically screamed and he had to keep from giggling. "But as I recall, somebody was begging to make her come with my tongue," this time the flat of his tongue pressed against her pussy, licking a long stripe from her entrance to her clit; another near scream. 'I love her all worked up.' "And I am a man of my word."

She wanted to quip back, offer some classically barbed comment to knock him down a peg; but as he set to work, his mouth sealing and sucking that pearl of nerves, she lost all capability of speech. What came from her were animalistic groans, pleas in the form of whimpers and whines as that silver tongue did wonders on her, taking her to the point of being overwhelmed, and proving she still had room to go further. His shoulders and neck bore the curves of her nails, his constantly coiffed hair mussed and wild with her pulling him as close as possible while he could still breathe. It didn't take much to get her to her next orgasm; a few more learned licks and sucks, and again he had her screaming. If all of Sanctuary didn't know she was alive and well, they did after that climax.

He let his body rest on his haunches, gazing up at her with a sopping wet grin, his salt and peppery whiskers beaded with her juices. He loved that taste, but moreover, loved making her fall apart with his mouth. He wasn't all talk, and that bite was as good as his bark. "Feelin' good there? All loosened up, nice n' light?"

"Fu-uck," she breathed long and low, watching with hooded eyes as he lost his underpants, that beautiful cock jutting out from his thatch of dark hair; it was as eager as he was, red and practically pulsing, a tempting bead of come pearling at his tip. Despite being two orgasms in and feeling like a jelly-based lifeform, the sight of his manhood had her ready to go one more time. Or a few more times. The night was young.

"I feel goddamn fantastic, teach," she purred, pushing herself up with her good arm, making room for him at her side. He was already getting the idea; with her shoulder still sore and damaged, he'd do best on his back til she was strong enough to take the ferocity of his sex. He could wait for that; but he couldn't handle another minute not being inside her. "But I'm gonna need you to fuck me to really feel like I'm home."

She straddled his lap as he clamped his paws around her thighs, fingers prodding at the meat of her legs; they matched each other's groans as she guided him inside her, that flared tip catching along her walls as she slid down, every inch filling her, fulfilling her, until he was completely and totally buried as deep as he could get. "Goddamn it, Delle..." he sighed, one hand moving to her hip as he simply drank in the sight of her; that bare, war torn body, every scar an extra morsel for him to crave, that thick hair now wild from thrashing, lips - upper and lower - rosied and wet. Good god she was his goddess; and she was there. She was breathing. 'I don't think I'll ever deserve her...'

She set the pace at first; she wasn't used to exerting so much energy yet, settling on subtle rolls and rocks of her body on his, only drawing out by mere inches before gliding back down. She was in no hurry to relinquish that delicious, full sensation. And he was fine with that... at first. His muscles
starting to twitch, aching to speed up, go faster, harder; remind her and that tight cunt who they belonged to, imprint his shape inside her. "Mm... sweet Jesus baby, can I...?" She gave a little tilt of her head as she gripped one of his arms, getting the go-ahead to get rough. 'With pleasure, sweetheart.'

"Oh fucking hell!" She shrieked a moan into the air at his first thrust, hard and ruthless, electrical impulses sending shock waves from her pussy to every inch of her being. He laughed as the next thrust matched the first, over and over again, an almost cruel speed had he not worked her up and got her going first. "Christ Negan, that's it, yes!"

"I know, baby," he hissed; both strong hands gripped her hips tightly and brought her down onto his impaling cock, her head and eyes rolling back in the excessive excitement. "Fuck I love the way you feel around me, this pussy was made to take my cock--mm!"

She could barely hear him, the blood rushing in her ears as well as her own moans were muffling his deep dirty words; she could feel her mind beginning to go blank, the back-to-back climaxes was proving far more overwhelming than she'd banked on, but she wasn't falling asleep til she'd come around his length at least once. The woman was goal oriented. "Ngh shit, Negan I-I don't think I can last much l-longer..."

"Then don't, baby," he panted; pounding her into oblivion was all he'd wanted it to be, but he was getting close himself. Even with all the loving his hand had provided in her absence, the feel of her wet, welcoming heat around him was no contest; his primal self was taking over, and screaming 'Come! Come! Come!' "Come for me Delle, let me make you lose yourself..."

His words were already starting to blur as she screamed his name, body arching up with her release, clamping down on his length before slumping forward, nails cutting into the thick of his biceps; her whimpers at the crook of his neck and a few final thrusts had him growling out her name back, unable to follow through on 'pullout-and-pray', his seed coated her insides, turning pink to white as his considerable load pumped deep inside her, bubbling out of her crevice and around his base.

'Shit... hope I didn't fuck things up that fast.' His hands moved to her back, rubbing softly as he kissed her head. "Sorry baby; wasn't exactly thinkin' with my big head there..." she didn't respond, just breathing softly into his skin. "Delle, sweetheart?" He pulled her head back just enough to find her face.

The poor girl was out cold. He'd quite literally fucked her into a coma.

"Well damn," he chuckled; kissing her forehead and checking her pulse; it was returning to normal, but she was exhausted. She'd needed this, but she needed restful sleep just as badly. Unwilling to pull out of her warmth, he wrenched his blanket out from under him, casting it over both their bodies as he moved slightly, cradling her head on his chest. There'd be plenty of time to apologize in the morning. She was home, and he was ready to get the best night's sleep he'd had in weeks.

A few doors down however, his right hand man was wide away and shaking with anger. Delle had been loud enough that time; and the worst person in Sanctuary had heard her loud and clear. Simon was all too aware Delle was alive now, and he was livid.

Trouble never did stray far from Delle Cornish.
Sure, they need to talk... but first ;)

Hi to the newcomers here!! Welcome to the utter craziness that is this fic. And as always, love to my regular readers ♡♡♡♡

(I really don't know if I am doin well unless you tell me ;_;)

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU! ♡♡♡♡
Negan slipped away as dawn crested outside his - their - window, pressing feathery kisses across her exposed throat before letting her sleep awhile longer. He'd scrawled a note - something quick in his usual chickenscratch that she'd recognize - before suiting up for his day ahead. Lucille would be his leading lady, until his beloved she-wolf was ready to roar again.

The night had been productive all around; teams led by his best lieutenants had gone out and proved that one does not fuck with the Saviors lightly. Gavin to the Kingdom, Simon to Hilltop, Arat going forth and searching for the Alexandrian refugees; he had to commend that girl for her work ethic.

"Hilltop is covered," he was stretched across the head of his meeting table like a happy cat, doling out commands into a radio. "The roads and then some. They are out there somewhere, so let's get balls deep in every nook and cranny they might hole up in," he glanced up at the sound of the door; Simon had come to him, as per usual, though there was something dark to his face. "Damn it."

"Nooks, crannies, and holes, people. All that shit outside the box." He tossed down the radio before having a closer inspection of Simon's visage; a thin, nigh on transparent mask of obedience hid the murderous betrayal underneath.

'Shit. He heard.'

"Appears our friends at Alexandria had themselves an escape plan," he wasn't going to broach the topic right away; not while his girl was still peaceful and happy upstairs. "Must be a damn tragedy, realizin' Rick's little one-eyed pride and joy is spendin' a little time with us," he chuckled as Simon's head dipped in a surrendering nod. "He's gonna be a fun one, I can feel it."

"Everybody needs a vacation once and awhile," Simon replied; Negan's hair raised at the statement. He'd called Simon a vacation mere days earlier. "Let me go out and close this thing." His second-in-command wanted the war over with as much as he did; if for different reasons.

"Arat's got it for now," Negan waved dismissively. "How'd the Hilltop go?" Simon had been assigned intimidation and allowed to kill a single person; only one. He'd done it, but damn if one didn't beg for more.

"As requested." He replied. It felt so mechanical; but it had to be. Some evil was bubbling inside of Simon, some thick black sludge that made him want blood. As much and as violently as possible. So mechanical he had to be.

"Good job. With an extra attaboy on top given I know you didn't want to play it that way." He'd have much rather killed the whole line of Hilltop, including that meddlesome widow; but that wasn't how they did things.

"You hear anything from Gavin?" Simon asked casually.

"Not yet, but it's coming. Gavin may be perpetually pissed off, but he keeps his shit dry and tight."

Simon tugged at his belt, his long torso stretching under his shirt. He was restless, and scared of what
he might do with a certain raven-haired, bright eyed psycho on the premises. "If I'm not running
down Rick and company, where do you want me?"

Negan motioned him closer, close enough to sit; he noticed the man's eyes flick to Lucille casually
across the table. 'Get that idea out of your head before I remove it from your shoulders, Si.'

"Garbage people." Getting Simon out of his hair for a time would mean a little more safety for Delle;
at least enough for her to move freely.

"Good," Simon nodded approvingly. If there was one faction they could do without, it was the
Scavengers. The scouts had seen them en masse with Rick, ready to invade Sanctuary and do them
in; had Eugene not come up with a plan they might've succeeded. "Eliminating those who reneged
might leave us a tad short on ammo, but it's worth it."

Negan couldn't have that. Simon was thinking too short term; in the long run, the Scavengers would
still prove useful. Easily swayed though they were, it meant they would follow his lead again without
much prompting. But to do that, they needed to be alive.

"I need you to hear me on this, Simon." He leaned in tight, both sets of dark eyes near black with
malice; he needed him to shove that shit down, while he was still awarding him the opportunity.
"Those piss-stained double-crossers may have pulled a triple cross, but it doesn't change the fact that
they are still a resource. So you're gonna choke back whatever shit is stirring up inside you and
remind them that a deal with the Saviors is a lock, stock, suck my barrel deal," he saw that mustache
twitch but he knew he was taking up his meaning. "Deliver the standard message, take one out, and
the rest will fall in line. Just one, Simon."

The darkness in him still stewed, his jaw tight with words he was trying not to speak. Negan far
preferred everything on the table. "If you've got something to say, say it."

"Maybe we should cut our losses here. These people can't learn the lesson, no matter how many
times we teach it," Simon's feelings were something furious; there were those right in front of him he
wanted dead, but he'd settle for the annihilation of the militia. Anything to ease the anger.
"Alexandria, Hilltop, Kingdom, these garbage rats they're not seeming to understand the situation.
Not one little bit."

Negan could do little more than hold himself back; he knew he was in part to blame for Simon's
current state. He just had to open his big mouth, let the truth slip when it wasn't supposed to; but
Simon was letting his rage control him, and that could prove detrimental. Even lethal.

"Oh, I am doing my best to hold it together right now," he growled, eyes boring into his head as his
voice ramped up. "You wanna cut your losses, take your own advice. Killing everybody to solve the
problem that is the easy way, not our way," he hoped he was driving the point home, but it could be
hard to tell with Simon. "What we do saving people, it is hard. But it damn well works."

Simon let the idea swim in his head for a moment; Negan's policies, his laws had proved inordinately
ineffective with these people. Had the Saviors only been a fluke? They certainly weren't working
now; and he said as much. "Not lately."

'This insubordinate fuck!' Negan found himself needing to quell his own anger, putting on his
trademark smirk. "Once I clip Rick, everything's aces again, Simon."

Their conversation was paused by a pounding on the door, Gary and two of his lessers filtering in
and carrying a slapdash pine box; something moving inside it.

"What the hell is that?" Negan asked, but Simon knew; he'd left that box with the Widow Maggie the night before, a 'favor' after killing one of her convoy. It seemed she had something to say. Something about another 38 was scrawled across the top, and a dread sank in his stomach.

"A delivery from the Hilltop," Gary explained, setting it across the table. He handed Negan a nail gun; anything could prove a useful weapon in their world. "I brought you something to deal with it. It's charged."

"Out." Negan commanded and they were gone. He jerked his head to Simon. Still obedient to a fault, he withdrew his knife and began popping the hammered down lid; only for the living dead creature within to finish the job. Negan suppressed it with a strong arm, a quick trigger of the nail gun to its temple ceasing its movements for good.

Simon peered in at the corpse, and his skin sizzled with furthered anger. "That's Dean! That means the other '38' that the Hilltop are holding are from the Satellite Outpost," His outpost housed some of the worst of the worst, but they were his all the same. "Those are my people! I'm gonna kill every last one of those farmers--"

"You will do exactly what I asked." Simon was known for flying off the handle, letting his temper make his decisions; that couldn't happen here.

"We can't let 'em get away with this shit--"

Lucille crashed into the table with a resounding crack, her wire scuffing the surface"You will do your job!" Negan hollered, his voice a hoarse growl that filled the room; if Simon didn't calm himself down, he sure wouldn't allow him around Delle. And that meant only one way out for the poor sap.

Simon's expression didn't change, fury incarnate; but he dipped his head in a nod, jaw flexing and tight. "Sure thing, boss man," he didn't meet his eye, simply stepped past his leader; before getting to his task he paused at the door, casting a loaded remark over his shoulder. "Tell Delle I said hello."

Before Negan could catch him he was on his way, rounding up his team for a visit to the Scavengers; the evil in him no less quieted than before.

Negan mopped his hand over his face; Delle was no less in danger, but he hoped Simon would follow his order to keep their world running. He had an empire to look after; and yet his right hand man was resulting in even more work.

God he hoped the kid was going to work out.

________________________________

Elsewhere, Delle's eyes were resisting the sunlight from the window panes; she had to get up eventually. For a moment she was caught by surprise that she could move her arms before she remembered the night before.

'He came for me.'

She smiled and rolled against his pillows, a cooled version of his warm scent filling her nostrils with
a deep breath. "Negan," she murmured; only to realize he wasn't there. "Where the hell did he run off to this time?" She sat up, hugging the black sheets to her bare skin, finding a note on the night table.

-Few things to deal with today
baby. Relax a little, I need my maniac
back in shape.

Love you, N.

She let her body drop back; despite her weakened state and their reunion, he still had cogs to turn. She couldn't fault him there; but she hated being out of commission. She didn't want to be some pretty bird, watching the action from the top of a tower; she was built for a fight and she wanted to be in this one. 'He won't even let me put down the dead once I tell him...' her hand was on her stomach again; trying to figure out how to prove to Negan she could still fight competently. She didn't want to be trapped at Sanctuary.

She studied his ceiling as she took stock of their current situation; Rick had been ready and eager to kill Negan the night before. Now that they held Carl captive, probably even more so. Negan's enemies were vying for his head, and even those within were dangerous now. Her mind conjured Dwight, that weasel of a double crosser; she wanted to end him herself, if Negan would let her. Simon, on the other hand... for a moment she held him in the same esteem as flesh-and-blood Lucille; her and Negan's running around had hurt yet another person in the process, and Simon was decidedly more deadly than Lucille had ever been. 'How do we keep doing this, over and over?' She pondered; history kept on repeating itself. Try to resist, commit to others, fall in love anyway. If it was fate's way of proving they couldn't fight their feelings for each other, it took the most painful route possible to do it. Heartbreaking kismet, it was kismet all the same.

She had to make up for it somehow; but the reality they were all living in demanded their attentions elsewhere. If she was going to get to a point where Simon didn't want to kill the both of them, she had to be sure they all lived that long. On top of all that mess, she felt a responsibility to Carl now; he'd kept her alive, and she owed him that much. What Negan had in mind was clear - get Carl onto their side, to forsake his father's fruitless warfare - but the idea was foolhardy. The boy, sympathetic though he was, loved his father. All he wanted was a peaceful end; and Delle was worried that Negan wouldn't respond well to his unbreakable gentility. So she would keep him safe as well. 'All in a day's work.'

At the sound of a lock turning she wrapped herself further in dark sheets, ready to fight at the drop of a hat; but it was only Negan on the other side of the door, Lucille in one hand, a cloth sack in the other and a forlorn expression on his features.

"Hard morning, teach?" He looked up to see his beloved firecracker still woven in their linens, her dark hair a stark contrast to her naked skin. She was a picture he hoped he'd remember forever.

"As per usual," he huffed and wandered to the edge of the mattress, sitting with an exasperated sigh. "I swear I spend half my days keepin' my own people from goin' all serial killer on everybody; can't get one of these assholes to cut me some goddamn slack," her hands caught his stubble, directing a salve-like kiss between their lips; he rumbled with a satisfied purr in his chest. "Mm... you do have your ways to make it brighter though baby."

'Baby.' She cursed inwardly, trying to ignore the ice cold chill of the unknown on her skin. However
he reacted, she'd be ready for it. She had to be doubly brave. "Heh, I try.... listen, Negan, there's something else - back in Alexandria--"

"Speakin' of!" He cut her off - fuck did she ever hate that. He set Lucille across the bedspread and delved into the bag he'd brought with him; jet black clothes were produced, a look far more in her wheelhouse. "Figured you'd want to look like yourself when we go talk with Carl."

She glanced to him, an impatient expectancy on his face. "What, you didn't like the clothes I had before?" She pretended to be insulted, sorting out a bra panties, then the larger than necessary black top before standing and stepping into tight black denim.

"Oh sweetie you know I like you best in nothin' at all," he grinned, relishing the sight of her ass hugged tight by dark pants. "But that ass and those perfect titties are for my eyes only; won't have you runnin' around Sanctuary buck-naked."

"I'm sure it would boost the fuck out of morale," she smirked, running a hand through messed hair. He produced an elastic band from a pocket, a ponytail capping off her signature darkness. "We really have to talk though, babe--"

"We will, sweetheart. Got our whole lives to talk each other's ears off," he felt warmth at the idea; as did she, confident in his love. "But we got to get this show on the road! Let's go see the kid," he swung his long arm over her shoulders, a kiss crowning her brow. "Actually, let's head down to the mess hall first; get a bite of food in you."

At the mention of food, she was suddenly a bottomless pit, aching to eat everything in the Sanctuary stores. 'Got to keep my strength up, don't I?' She smiled up at him as they moved to leave. 'I'll tell him today. I will.' "Do we have any pickles?"

Chapter End Notes

So my wifi is all fucked up here :( hoping to have it fixed soon. No delay on chapters as of yet but I'll keep you guys updated if that changes.

Mostly screen to text interactions here ;P thoughts?

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU! ♥♥♥♥
Chapter 104

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The road stretched on, but it all seemed dim even in the bright Virginian sun; and it only grew darker with every mile, as much as Simon tried to force down the furious bile that was steeping in his spirit. His exchange with Negan hadn't gone well, and now he was expected to silence his temper in the face of even more indignation. It wasn't a good day for him.

She was alive; but how was he supposed to feel? She had mountains of history with Negan that she never thought to mention; hell, had she been screwing him the entire time they'd been together?

"No, not together; just sex," Simon corrected himself and his outlook grew darker still. "Just sex, my ass. Whatever she and Negan had was something deep, deeper than he could've ever hoped to have with her; he bet it was what kept her from feeling for him what he felt unrequited. As per usual, Negan was getting in his way, taking what wasn't his - at least, not anymore - and expecting Simon to grin and bear it. But he was getting sick of it, and grinning so long was starting to hurt.

"Let's make sure they get the message this time." Simon decreed as they pulled up on the edge of the dump, his team rolling out of the trucks and ready to fight; if it came down to it. He hoped that it would; he wanted blood. Oceans of it.

Carl was more than a little stir crazy when Lucille's wood pounded against their door. "Carl! How're you enjoying your stay at Chez Sanctuary?" Oh Negan, arrogant to the last.

"This is a bad idea, Negan," clearly he hadn't been enjoying the amenities; he'd slept in her old bed at least, but it was obvious he was antsy. "My dad's not gonna listen to reason if you kill me--"

"Well hey now, I've got no plans on endin' your moody little life, kid," Negan swung up his hand defensively, Delle leaning into the door as she listened. "I want you to understand that your daddy - his whole team - is in the wrong here. And you're gonna see the light."

The kid looked unimpressed and unconvinced. "That isn't going to happen; I want this war to end but you're not the righteous one here. None of this would've gone on if it weren't for what you did to Glenn, to Abraham..."

"And that would not have happened if your headstrong tiny-dick-swinging daddy didn't get it in his head to go and shoot up my outpost," he raised a brow as Carl's head dipped in shame. "I might not have known all their names, but they were people. They didn't deserve to die."

Carl had to bend to that; they'd been acting off the request of Gregory, the deal only existing if they managed to take down the Saviors. If it hadn't been for that choice, who knew - they might've never even met each other.

His silence spoke volumes that Negan was all too happy to hear. "I know I got your ear now, kid," he drawled, smug and sneering. "And then he went and did it again yesterday! You know there was
even a little baby at that outpost? Where do you think she is now? What happened to her?"

Carl was actively avoiding his stare now; he was wearing him down. "M-My dad wouldn't hurt a baby," he glanced to Delle. "He's not about to hurt innocent people."

"Can you say the same of everybody in your camp?" That was a big question, and a difficult one. "My people may be dickbag dogs from time to time, but that's how I want them. That's what I've trained them to be. No surprises," he leaned in close, a practiced invader of personal space. "How well do you know every last fucker in that militia?"

She had to admit, the man was good; he'd made a fair few points that might've swayed a lesser member of Rick's army. His son wouldn't turn so easily; and he looked to Delle for common ground.

"Delle," his voice strained, not out of pain, but desperation. "I kept my dad from killing you, didn't I? He can be reasoned with; kidnapping me is not going to get him in a reasonable mindset."

"You're safer with us than them," she shrugged; a little bit of Negan's attitude had already rubbed off on her. "Last I checked, Alexandria was a smokey, ashy hole in the ground. Meanwhile, you're here..." she cast a judging eye around her old room. "Two-and-a-half star digs, safe and sound. We're doing him a favor, really."

"These digs are fine, prissy!" Negan barked with feigned insult before getting back to Carl. "Daddy can't even keep his own son safe. And you really think he's comin' out on top in all this?"

That was enough for the kid; with a frustrated roar he lunged at Negan, who quickly swing himself out of the way. He hit the floor and was kept there by Negan's boot, his snickering poison in his ears. "Goddamn boy! Give peace a try indeed!"

"Delle," he was vying for her better angels again, being too haphazard with his words. "Delle you know this won't end well for anyone, please, think of your future, your--"

"I'm thinking plenty, kid!" She hissed with a deadly glare, before he could get out the damning next word. She knew it started with a B. "You need to get it through your head, Carl - one side is gonna be decimated up the ass by the time this is over; and it won't be us. Make the right call here."

'Something else to talk about later.'

A nervous rapping on the door paused their discussion. "N-Negan," that deep southern twang could only mean Eugene. "I apologize for nosin' into whatever comms ya'll may have got up to, I just need to commandeer a few minutes of your day. I am well aware your seconds are a precious resource, bit I believe what intel I have to be rare at the least."

Negan's eyes rolled hard, his body dipping at his knees; it seemed his kingdom couldn't run for five minutes without his personal instruction. He looked to Delle, a serious look on his face. "I don't want you alone with the kid."

"I'll be fine," she was about eighty percent sure of that. "I'm still quick. Kid knows better than that." He didn't love the idea, but he didn't have the time to argue back at her. There was too much to deal with.

"He tries shit, you kill him," he pressed a kiss to her lips before heading off with the scientist. "He's not worth losin' you."
As soon as the door shut she spun to face him; dizzied slightly and still a little unsteady. "What the fuck was that!? What is it with you and not keeping your mouth shut!?"

"You didn't even tell him yet?" He answered with his own question. "Must be pretty insecure to not even tell him about his own damn baby."

"Hey," she snarled, a muscle in her face twitching with anger. "We've had alot to unpack and shit and..." she instantly pictured Negan's body underneath hers, egging her on; but she wasn't sharing that with the boy. "And stuff to talk about."

"You have to tell him," Carl begged. "It might be enough to get him to call off the Saviors--"

"He even thinks about trying that and I'll send the men out in double the force. Your dad's the one who should be backing down, shit would've been fucking fine if he'd just fallen in line!" She was under his nose now, glaring up at him.

"People are starving, dying under his reign. Do you really think he knows his precious army as well as he thinks he does?" There were vast amounts of them; even she suspected he couldn't know them all. "He bumps off people for punishment like he's culling the herd. How long did he think he could keep that up before someone rebelled? Before everyone did?"

Okay, so it wasn't the best system; but weren't most of them alive? Had both sides not lost enough to even out the score? "It works. We give refuge to those who can't fight, who can't survive out there. Everybody else, we've lived this long because we can, because we're able; we're giving that possibility back to the meek. Nobody goes hungry who can't provide for themselves."

"There's better ways to do that, Delle!" He retorted. "Nobody has to starve, nobody needs to die. We can figure this out, but he needs to be willing to do some work."

"So does Rick!" She spat. "You expect Negan to bend over and take whatever fucking bullshit you want to saddle him with, so far as literally killing him! What gives your people the right to be judge jury and executioner!?" She balled up her fists to resist punching him. "I know we're not good people, but he doesn't deserve to die!"

Carl blinked at her, more than a little shaken. This was his first run in with the fire that pumped through her veins. "I-I know that," he said gently, hands up in defence. "I'm trying to make sure that doesn't happen... but the longer you hold me here, the less likely it is he'll walk away alive."

She sniffled; only noticing her wet cheeks then. 'When the hell did I start crying?' "He'll keep himself alive. I'll keep him alive," she slicked the unexpected tears from her face, no less fiery for them. "You'll see. Rick is going to fall; and he will have done it to himself."

She had nothing more to say to the captive kid, leaving and locking the door with force; he'd shaken her right back. The fear of losing Negan this time was far more real than it'd ever been; it wouldn't just be her that he'd be leaving alone anymore, and that couldn't happen. Not under any circumstance. 'He's going to be fine,' she told herself. 'It's going to be fucking fine.' She marched her practiced step down the halls of Sanctuary, ignoring shocked looks as she went by; others had thought her to be dead too, and word was slowly spreading of her livelihood as well as her apparent relationship. She'd stopped caring at that point; she just wanted to be with him, and decidedly stopped giving a fuck about what anyone else said or thought. 'They want to attack me for being his woman? I'll give as good as got.' In this specific instance, she wouldn't fight fate.
"Sweetheart, you have got to stop runnin' off on me," her lover's voice had her startled; she was nearly to the courtyard, desperate for some air after her little exchange with the son of Alexandria. She calmed as soon as Negan's arms folded behind her back, tugging her in close. "You'll have me goin' grey chasin' your sexy little behind around all live long."

She smirked and reached up, stroking with the grain of his styled hair. "Hate to break it to you teach, but you're more salt than pepper now," he scowled, pretending to be wounded. It earned him a soft kiss at his neck. "You're lucky I like things salty."

"Sure am, babygirl," his lips graced her forehead, taking a moment of bliss before the shit storm of their world came flooding back in. The team from Alexandria was missing, probably dead, including turn coat little Dwight; he'd hoped to kill him himself, or give him to Delle as a vengeful gift. On top of that, the Kingdom team had gone missing as well; they were more than likely dead too. His men were dropping like flies, and it was the last thing he'd needed. Eugene had only carried more bad news...and a few ideas. "That dickbag priest Gabriel went runnin’ off with Carson; probably tryin' to get back to his brother. Gabey's in a bad way though, he won't get too far... and we'll find out who was shit headed enough to help them escape."

She felt her stomach turn and tried not to vomit. It was anxiety as well as fear; if she was going to survive her pregnancy, she'd prefer it with a doctor around. 'Should've taken Sidiq with us when we ran.'  "Scouting teams will bring them in soon, I bet," she assured him, patting his chest. "Then you can introduce the culprit to Lucille."

"My genius girl," he grinned, kissing her lips again; he felt the slight quiver of a moan against his lip, and it was enough to get him ready to go all over again. Hell, he could probably get away with fucking her against that very wall, glaring away any unwanted eyes; but she was still tired, he could tell. 'Another day.' "Eugene had some fun thoughts on our next attack; he'll be worth his weight in bullets at his own outpost."

"His own? Seriously?" She had an incredulous look on her face. That cowardly brainiac of all people would be running his own outpost? 'Slim pickings around here.' It only fueled her worries.

"He'll have a dedicated team to work on the ammo; shit's gonna be peachy again soon, baby." He sounded confident; but that was Negan. Confident in everything and nothing all at once.

"If you say so," she had to take up his time; when else could she possibly do it? Their world was moving a mile a second, and if she wasn't careful he'd never hear of it at all. "So Negan, earlier, I was saying--"  

"Sir!"  'OH FOR FUCK'S GOOD HONEST SAKE!' Norris, a lesser Savior, yelled from the catwalk doors. It was enough to pull his attention away, enough to get him distracted. 'At this rate he won't know he's a father til he's holding the fucking baby.' "Simon's back from the Scavengers meeting; somethin' else, too..."

What a day it'd proved to be. Simon was supremely certain that the Scavengers had got with the program, confident and seemingly a little happier. A smile on that man's face could mean many different things, however Negan chose to go with the positive. He knew Simon knew better than to fight him at the moment.
Dwight had returned home as well; and on Delle's suggestion, Negan hadn't thrown him into the cells or onto the dead fence. No, she was right; let him think he was still getting away with things, that the information Negan fed him was safe to feed to the militia. Watch them get poisoned and turn on Dwight themselves. His girl was so clever.

He'd allowed Dwight to attend a gathering though, bordering the dead fence for a demonstration of one of Eugene's sicker, badass ideas. A dead one was laced up against the chain links; freshly sweltering in the heated sun. It'd do nicely.

"You all know how it works," he'd begun, addressing a team of some fifty Saviors. These were all he'd need to take the Hilltop, if they could follow his instructions. "You get a bite, some kind of wound from one of these things, something from them gets in you, and you die," anyone who'd lived so long knew the drill. "You join the club which sucks; what if we could use that to our advantage?" He was surprised to see Delle going a little pale; she'd seen him do far worse than shoving Lucille's barbed end into the corpse's face, it's rotting body. That bat had never been more lovely, coated in rancid red. "Ahh, you see how Lucille is getting to know our beautiful, cold friend here?" He grinned, so satisfied, blood and clinging skin hanging from his Lucille. "That's it; look at that. No more smashing and bashing. With this, well, this, it can just be a touch. Or a big, wet kiss," he didn't falter but made a mental note of her walking away; had they not just had a talk about her running off? "Either way, this gets you full membership, and that's what we want. We want people to join the club. Hilltop is gonna learn to toe the line one way or another, dead or alive...or some kinda shit in between."

Delle, while Negan finished his smug speech, was vomiting her guts out into the nearest receptacle she could find. 'How the fuck am I supposed to fight the dead if I can't keep my lunch down at the sight of them!?' She glanced to the can below her, swimming with chunks of pickle and stomach acid; and threw up again. 'Fuck I gotta track him down. I'm gonna fucking kill him.'

She found him happily lounging on his couch in their bedroom, swirling a tumbler of whiskey in his grip; he still wished for ice. She wiped her mouth as he stood, coming to greet her with a kiss in her hair; she wasn't going subject him to a bile flavored tongue. He had enough of a shock coming to him.

"Hey sweetheart," he murmured, nuzzling her hair; what was that acidic smell? "You ran off before the end of my lecture; should make you stay late for detention or some shit."

"You know I always skipped detention," she swallowed a dry mouthful of nothing, her nerves suddenly aching and on fire. "Negan, I--"

"I know, baby; see what it we're doin' is slickin' our weapons down in all that dead blood and guts, gettin' em nice and coated--"

"--I gathered that," he was going to make her throw up again with this talk. "Listen--"

"We're goin' after the Hilltop tomorrow," she was a hair away from ripping his tongue from his head. "Now I know you're still recuperatin', so if you want to sit this one out its fine, but I need my crazy little lady up and runnin' sooner rather than later--"

"Negan I fucking swear if you don't shut your goddamn trap I'll tear your voice box out of your throat!" She shrieked, his mouth gaping a moment. "Now shut your fucking mouth and let. Me. TALK!"
'Well damn; she could've just said so.' He stood before her, crossing his arms casually. "Well go ahead sweetheart; you got yourself a captive audience," he extended the glass in his hand to her. "Drink? Calm your tits?"

"No," she sighed, though she wished she could; every nerve felt raw and exposed, and she had inexplicable terror filling her gut. "Just listen to me... somethin' happened, while I was in Alexandria. A-and before I tell you what I need to know you won't treat me any different, or act like I'm less of a person or whatever," 'Fucking christ!' The tears were flowing again on their own; a brand new side effect of his baby in her belly. "I-I just need to know w-we'll be okay..."

"Sweetheart," he soothed, setting the glass down to cup her cheeks, coating her face in his kiss. "It's fine; whatever shit you learned or whatever happened, I got you. I love you. Stop cryin' out those beautiful eyes," he pleaded, stroking away each drop with his thumbs. "We'll be okay; just tell me. It's just you and me here, baby."

That did it. She gazed up into his loving, concerned face; she felt a little better, but somehow no safer. "I-It's not." She muttered.

His brows turned up. "Not what, Delle?"

With a quivering sigh she took his right hand - cursing her own set for trembling so terribly. "It's... it's not just you and me here, Negan." She placed his spread hand, his warm palm on her lower stomach, pressing against the back of it with her own, praying he'd get the picture as she looked into his eyes; she thanked whoever had heard her prayer as shock and realization took over his face.

"Delle..." he breathed, her name almost like a song on his lips; she couldn't be. After all she'd done for him, after how long he'd waited for her, she couldn't be giving him this, too. "Delle, A-are you...?"

"I'm gonna fucking kill you, geezer," it was all the confirmation he needed, his long arms twisting around her body and raising her off the ground; she wrapped her limbs around him as he spun her, holding so tight, burying his face in her neck. "I told you I would."

"You can kill me all you want baby," she could hear the crackle in his voice, tearful joy embedded in his speech. "Already feels like I've died and gone to heaven."

"Hardly heaven," she murmured in fear as he pulled back enough to see her. "This is the last place I wanted this to happen..."

"It'll be perfect," he vowed, setting her down, smoothing her hair. "I'm going to end Rick and his team and make this world safe as can be for you," he surprised her as he dropped to his knees, cradling her clothed belly with both hands; he wasn't talking to her anymore. "Safe for both of you."

She felt her face twitch, more tears coming on; she wasn't sure if they were scared or happy this time.

Chapter End Notes

Hope this was the kind of reaction ya'll were hoping for♡
Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU! ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 105

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

He was lying awake, studying her face; he'd never actually fallen asleep. Moonlight filled their chambers, making her skin nearly glow in its cold shine, her chest rising and falling in well earned slumber. He'd tired her out again.

They'd made love twice after she'd let him in on her secret; real, raw passion in the worship of each other's bodies. The carnal euphoria he bathed the both of them in helped to belay the fact that he was fucking terrified.

'Pregnant,' He repeated it over and over in his head. 'I got her pregnant. I'm going to be a father,' his heart was full of an ice cold joy, a bitter excitement. 'If we can get that far...' pregnancy had become a dirty word to him over time, filthier than any of the actual curses that spilled from his mouth; to him, pregnancy only ever resulted in blood, tears and disappointment

He'd always wanted a family; before the end, he and Lucille had tried so many times, and every time it would fail. He could remember the countless trips to fertility specialists, having his swimmers tested - A-OK - and comforting his heartbroken wife when her own system was deemed less than accommodating. When he'd met Delle, when he'd fallen in love, he'd considered it again; she was young, healthy, but he wasn't about to rock their tumultuous relationship with the suggestion of a baby. When it all ended, when he and Lucille left... he resigned himself to the fact he'd never call a child his.

But here she was; lying by his side, fast asleep, all fucked out, and full up with his baby. 'Pregnant.' He mouthed the word this time, rolling silent syllables on his tongue as he gingerly tugged the blankets down to her hips; when he'd normally eye her tits - he still did - but his concentration fell to her belly, his hand falling warm against her stomach. Something - someone - was growing in there, and for the first time in his life, there were decent odds he'd meet that someone on the outside. With all the trauma he'd put her through, the emotional and literal torture, she was still giving him the best chance he'd ever had at a family. A real one; not just a legacy.

It was more important than ever to take Rick down. He had to assume the enemy had no idea about the pregnancy; if they had there was no chance they'd have kept her in such lenient holdings, if they'd kept her alive at all. 'I got to keep these two alive,' his fingertips traced circles across her skin, worried and excited to see her grow. The larger task would be getting her to stay put; he loved her maniacal side, and knew she could be a holy terror, but she held precious cargo! As much as she'd hate it - maybe even hate him - for it, he couldn't let the outside world ruin his shot at a family.

"I know you're staring, pops," her eyes were still closed, but the smile on her lips said she was awake. "You need to get some rest. We've got a big day tomorrow."

He smirked and dropped his face to her neck, mouthing at her flesh. "How can I sleep when the mother of my child is lyin' there so sexy," he growled approvingly, gripping her hip for a little extra flesh. "I'm gonna be pullin' all nighters staring at you when that baby starts to swell."

She felt a blush on her cheeks, opening her eyes to his; sure, he still had that primal lust blowing his pupils, but she could see the worry, the fear. It didn't seem to fit on his face. "What's runnin' in your
head? You look like you saw a ghost.” She had him pegged, quick and clear.

"I'm just thinkin' out plans of attack, babygirl," 'Good god what if it is an actual baby girl? Will I have to stop calling her that?' "Still got a war on our hands; now I got to hunt down prenatal vitamins and whatnot; give our kid a proper entrance into the world." He was all too familiar with the finer details needed in the early days of pregnancy; later on and after though, he was clueless.

"I've been doin' alright keeping the little thing alive so far," she met his hand with hers, fingers weaving over her skin. "I mean, so far as I can tell."

"As soon as we get that escapee Carson back we'll get you a proper check up, head to toe, in and out," he smirked as she pretended to gag, but he was completely serious. "Find out everything we got to know; then once this whole fuckin' mess is settled with the communities we're takin' that ultrasound from Hilltop, I want to see my kid as soon as fuckin' possible--"

"Negan," she spoke softly; half from sleep, half from gentility. "We're doin' fine. You need to sleep and stop rattling off lists in your head."

"I want to be ready," he admitted, his other hand stroking the tips of her hair. "Want to cover every goddamn possibility, I'm not gonna let us get caught with our pants down on this - and you..." he looked to her, unsure of how to say 'you're on bedrest til the kid pops out,' and not make her storm away.

"You're nervous," she stated, hands tracing along his broad chest; she could still remember Lucille's heartbreaking stories from years before, the failed pregnancy, and all those that had come before. "I get it. I do. But I..." she paused, seeing the past of disappointments and despair swimming in his eyes. "...I'm not her. So far as I know, I don't have anything wrong with my baby oven; so the bun inside it is perfectly fine," she squeezed his hand tight, rubbing her belly in one fluid motion. "If it helps ease those nerves, I'll stay here for the Hilltop attack. Just promise me you'll come back."

He did feel some relief at her assurances, leaning in to ghost his lips over hers. "I swear," he murmured, millimeters from her mouth. "I'll be back to you and Junior in no time at all."

"Good," she purred, seeking out another kiss; he rumbled against her mouth, tongue chasing her distinctive flavor. "Think you're ready for some shut eye?"

"In a minute," she yelped in surprise when he flattened her onto her back, his hips splitting her legs. She could feel his hot, thick cock pressed between her folds as insistent as before, that velveteen head flicking her entrance. "Think I need to tire myself out again."

"You're such a fucking caveman," she ended the last word with a whimper, his length sliding into her agonizingly slowly; their earlier bouts had left her sensitive and a bit sore, but the feel of his every vein rubbing against her walls was working up a rapid slick to aid him. Her body wanted him as much as she did. "B-but I'm not about to stop you."

"I know you won't, sweetheart," slow, thorough thrusts were the order of the night, his hips rolling in a practiced rhythm. He took hold of her unhindered hand and pressed it over her head, fingers interweaving as he felt her skin grow hotter. "Fuck, I won't be able to get my dick out of you when you start to show; whole damn world is gonna know you're mine."

"Pretty sure they already do-- Ohh..." her eyes fell shut again, head tilting back as his tongue and lips traced the pulse in her neck. "Oh right there..."
"Fuck yes, right there," he agreed, his tip massaging that spongy sweet spot inside of her, silken walls clenching around his length. "All sexy and round with our little fuck-trophy--"

"Don't call the baby a fuck-trophy," she arched into his mouth as it closed around her nipple, sucking and grazing with teeth. "M-Mmmy child's first memories won't be of t-their daddy bein' uncouth."

"Baby have you met me?" He chuckled breathlessly, each snap of his hips getting him closer and closer. "Uncouth is who I am; its why you love me." She practically screamed his name as his fingers traced her bud of nerve endings, eyes rolling back at the surplus pleasure.

"I-I guess it helps - oh god! - b-bein' that I'm worse," she was rocking her pelvis up to meet his now, his hand and his cock had her racing to the edge of orgasm at lightning speed. "Don't stop, fuck--fuck!" She was tightening up around him; his name a breathy chant again and again.

"Go on sweetheart, I've got you," he strained in a hoarse whisper. "Almost there, shit, come with me baby, fuck!" He felt her clamp down just as he lost his own control as well, balls deep as he pumped her full of his seed. He could barely hold himself together; eyes shutting and brows screwing up while her climax sent waves of muscle spasming down his length. Her encumbered hand dug half-moon marks into his forearm, panting like at the end of a marathon - triathlon, more like.

"F-fucking hell," she whispered, pressing her forehead against his, sweat intermingling. "Think you can sleep now, Daddy-to-be?"

He felt his cock twitch and they both groaned. "Don't go callin' me that, you're gonna make me get you pregnant all over again."

"That's not physically possible."

"I'll fuckin' make it possible," she snickered, though her eyes were already faltering with fatigue. He cupped her cheek, a goodnight-kiss meeting her lips. "Sweet dreams, Delle."

"You too, Negan," she whispered, wriggling into his side as he rolled back into his place; her pussy dripping with his efforts threefold. "I love you."

"I love you too, mamma bear."

The courtyard was active with busy Saviors, preparing for their grotesque attack on Hilltop; from the doors behind the catwalk, hidden in shadow, she could see Simon - the poor soul - filling buckets with the putrid guts of the dead. She had figured it was more the smell that scent her vomiting, and less the sight; but that still meant she couldn't take part. The plan was hideous, more than a little dirty; but it would work, executed properly. She could see Dwight, the spineless little sellout, doing much of the same, totally unaware she knew his secret, who thought he was being clever and coy. *I'll show him, that bastard.*

The morning had provided mixed news on all fronts; Eugene had supplied the necessary ammo - barely - from his new bullet making outpost, the smelters having worked through the night to meet quota. On a lesser note, however, Gabriel had been found; but Carson had been killed trying to run. He'd tried to smuggle out the priest on his own - extremely sick, now looking close to blind - and
died in the process. It set Delle off kilter; she hoped the Saviors would have the presence of mind not to kill the Hilltop's Carson or Sidiq.

They were nearly ready to leave. Negan was riding solo for the first time in awhile, his usual passenger out of commission; but given her reasoning he wouldn't have it any other way. He still made her jump and grumble as he snuck up behind her, squeezing her ass.

"Hey mamma bear," he drawled in her ear; she glanced at him, but couldn't help but to see Simon staring up at the both of them, expression dark as night. "Just watchin' the cogs at work?"

"Wanted to be sure nobody would get you killed while I'm not around to stop it," she shook her head and turned to him, accepting a kiss as his bare hand snaked up her back, front-to-front. "Can't have you comin' back here a shambling corpse."

"It's gonna work out perfect, babygirl," he kissed at her forehead, though he could feel most of his Saviors gawking up at them now. 'Let 'em look; let 'em see who she belongs to.' "We'll be back by tomorrow mornin', Rick's head on a pike."

"Quite the souvenir," she smiled, those bright eyes dazzling him as they always did. "I love you, Negan. Don't you dare get your ass killed."

"I love you too," he grinned like a fool. "And I won't." The world seemed brighter than usual as he readied his car, a fresh bucket of blood and guts waiting for Lucille in the passenger seat; she'd steep in it all the way there. Delle was effectively back from the dead, still miraculously, inexplicably in love with him; and he was about to be a father. In a matter of months she'd given him everything he'd wished so dearly for all his life. Sure, there'd be an adjustment period with his men, with all of Sanctuary; but they'd fall in line. He'd taught them well to do just that.

But there was someone he needed to talk with about all of it, before anything else. Someone who was owed an explanation.

Belting himself in, he looked to Lucille. When he looked at that bat he didn't see his wife - she was long gone, presumably put down - but he felt her presence with it near. Watchful, his support always at hand, forgiving of all the terrible things he did oh so often; of all the horrid acts he put her through. He knew it was just an updated piece of sports equipment; but he felt her there, regardless. And he owed her words.

"Lucille," he started, his voice apologetic as he pulled out of the courtyard, past the gates; his personal team of lieutenants following suit. "You've probably already noticed... heard me talkin' about it... Delle is pregnant," it choked him up a little to think of it; both in excitement and repentance. "I'm gonna be a daddy."

He pulled onto the main roads, the bat jostling slightly in its personal pool of organs. "I... I never expected all this, hon'," he truly hadn't. What were the odds he'd be starting a family in the midst of armageddon? "I know I don't deserve any of this for a second - we hurt you, I hurt you - but... but I needed to tell you," he spoke gently, racing along; in a larger vehicle he might've tried to take out a few dead ones, but not that day. "I need you to know that... I'm not a good man," his voice cracked a little; he hadn't talked like this with her in a long time. Too long. "I'm not, but I'm goin' to be the best damn father I can be for this kid. The kind you always told me I would be."

His heart twisted; in those final days, he'd felt something close to love for her again. It wasn't what he'd felt for Delle - at that time the wound was still too raw - but he had felt something again. Maybe
it had been what love seemed like before he'd met his young wildfire; and he'd settled oh that being the last love he'd feel in his life. Delle had once again been a surprise. "This must be hard for you to see; and I'm sorry you've been seein' it," he thought of all the nights the bat had been on an armchair, right next to the bed while they fucked; it felt blasphemous, traitorous even. "I just... I hope I can be the man you wanted me to be, Lu; at least for this baby," his hand squeezed the steering, turning into a small business park, winding through long abandoned warehouses. "She... Delle's brought somethin' out in me I thought was gone," he sighed, shaking his head. "After last time, what happened... the move... I never expected this. I honestly didn't--"

He didn't finish his thought; he couldn't. One minute he was driving, pouring his heart out; the next his car was doing flips, T-boned by some other driver, blood and organs spattering the interior. He was out cold by the time vehicle settled on its side; someone was intent on forcing him to break his promise to Delle.

_T'll be back... I swear._

Chapter End Notes

So what do ya'll think of this one? I really want to know; I hope I characterized bat-Lucille decently, relating his non canon feelings to it.

Please tell me what you think; I'm so in need of validation ;_;

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU! ♡♡♡♡
Negan woke up to the stench of dead blood in his nose, completely disoriented. He could feel the red ooze slithering around him, his body crumpled into the far side of the turned car; there was bruising, without a doubt, likely a cracked rib at least. He took rapid stock of what he knew; someone had run him off the road. He didn't know how long he'd been out for. And his promise to return to Delle was in serious danger of not coming true. As much as he could with his battered body, he sprang into action, crawling free of the broken passenger window, Lucille in hand and coated in blood. Disoriented, but fully aware of the sound of bullets raining down toward him, he ran for the nearest building; all too certain he'd encounter dead inside, but he needed some form of cover. He wasn't sure who'd ran him down, but he had an inkling...

The building was pitch dark, maybe an old packaging site; he could hear the hiss of the dead from below, so naturally he took to higher ground. The staircase - unused for years - was unsound, but there wasn't another option. In dim light he could make out the figure who'd followed him in, that stature and posture giving him away. 'Fucking Rick.'

He saw him aim, but at the pull of his trigger there was no shot; he'd blown his load before even coming in the building. "Hey, prick," he tried to sound uninjured; but his bones were aching. Car crashes will do that. "You are out of bullets. Come on up."

Rick, as per usual, was of few words but many actions; he went for the staircase but his hatchet made it up faster. He swung his arm, sending it flying and making Negan swing out of the way; the damn railing breaking down and leaving him dangling from the second floor, Lucille somewhere in the dark below. "Lucille!" He couldn't go losing her either. "Oh you fucking asshole..." Rick's boots were at his fingertips now, those mean blue eyes glaring down at him, ax ready to lodge in his skull; dropping to the basement was his only choice. He hit broken wood and cement with a thud, gaining new bruises and exacerbating the existing ones; he had to focus, find Lucille, off Rick, and get himself back to the Saviors and Delle. It was a task, to say the least.

He delved further into the dark, eyes straining to find his bat; he could hear Rick's heavy footfalls coming down the stairway, searching him out. "You still alive?" He'd rip that southern tongue out of his head, he would.

"Damn right," Negan chuckled, voice bouncing off the brick and concrete to hide his exact location. "I'm a goddamn cat... can't keep me down," his hands groped at the blackness, trying to curl around Lucille's handle. "C'mon Lu, where are you..."

"Where's your people?" Rick demanded, affecting a similar smug tone to his intended victim. "They should be here by now, I didn't run you too far."

'Dickwad,' "Oh they're comin'." God he hoped so; they'd be following Dwight and Simon, neither of whom were huge fans of his at the time. 'They best be lookin' for me.'

"This is where you die," smug didn't suit Rick, it didn't sound right in his voice. "In the dark, all alone."
Negan shook his head; surely Rick wasn't so thick not to realize his life was all that stood between his son being killed by some lesser savage at Sanctuary? "What the hell is your problem, Rick?" He hunted for Lucille as he spoke; chewing out the other man like he hadn't been scolded in years.

"Huh? I mean, I know you're working through some shit, your son switchin' teams and all," he thought he heard a gasp - had Rick known his boy was alive at all? "I know...but if you aren't the most stubborn know-it-all prick I've ever crossed dicks with! 'Goddamn it Lucille where are you!?' "Why didn't you just let me save you, Rick? I'm good at it. I saved everybody in the Sanctuary, the Outpost, Hilltop, Kingdom I saved them all - their kids - can grow up safe. They didn't lose one after we took over. All those people were doing just fine before Rick Grimes!"

He saw a light glowing around the corner; Rick had himself a flame casting sight around his surroundings. He'd planned ahead. "That wasn't a world anybody wanted to live in; it only ever worked for you."

'Fuck him if he can't understand my business plan!' "Because you were doin' such a bang up job - tell me, how many leaders at Alexandria died once you showed up?" He did have a point there.

"You've not only failed your boy, you failed your people, Rick. Kind of makes me sick just thinking about it; all that wasted potential. I'll get him fixed up... But, see, there is still hope," he had to get out of that fucking basement; he had his own family to think about. "A one-time deal that I will make to sate your badass son, someone that I actually respect. You get Hilltop, Kingdom, Alexandria to fall in line, and our arrangement is back in place, and you are forgiven, Rick."

Still searching, still no Lucille. 'Fucking fuck!' "I will lower my take from 50% to 25% A lousy 25%! But you, you got to come work for me," who was he not to add a little insult? "Janitorial to start; maybe you can nanny for me sometime, when you've earned the chance. Not bad at all! Your people, they get to live like 75% kings, and you'll get to see me raise your kid right!" He grinned to himself. "It'll be good practice for me. Now, that is an epic freakin' Christmas-Hanukkah-Kwanzaa gift all rolled up into one, considering what a thorn in my ass cheek you've all been." 'Take the fucking deal, Rick."

Rick paced through the dark, trying to catch that leather coated monster while processing everything he'd let slip. Carl was still alive - or so he said - and it sounded like that she-wolf he should've killed was expecting a litter. It made him sick. "Now, why would I trust any deal offered to me after what you did to Jadis' people?"

This made Negan take pause. So far as he knew everything had gone swimmingly with the Scavengers; according to Simon."The hell are you talking about?"

"The Scavengers - you killed them," Rick explained. 'I most certainly motherfucking did not!' "All of them. A whole community just wiped out. Is that how you save people?"

It absolutely wasn't; but it was Simon's way. That lying, two faced, psychotic little bastard,' Negan's teeth ground in rage. 'Tryin' to ruin our play 'cause he can't get his dick wet in my girl -- he's gonna get such a fuckin' asskicking... ' "Son of a bitch."

Rick's eyes studied his own surroundings; he heard the dead close by, but no new living sounds. If Negan's people were going to come for him, they would have by then. "Still just me and you even though plenty of your people must've seen you go. See?" His voice dripped with pomp and attitude. "See, it's times like this, you realize who your true friends are. No one's coming for you."

'She'd come,' He thought to himself. 'She'd track me down, no damn question.' He could hear the shuffle of dead ones just past his location; if he wasn't careful, he'd be biter-bait. Rick, in the
meantime, had found something interesting.

"What you have - oh, that was never gonna last," Rick's diatribe was unending, apparently. "Sooner or later, you were gonna meet someone like me. You can't save me or my people or even yours. You can't save anyone, because you don't care about anyone; not your Saviors, not your workers. Not even that poor dumb girl who thinks you love her," he sounded disgusted. Mostly because he was. "You use people to bring food, to sleep with you, to protect you. Even manipulated that Delle into a pregnancy - and you won't care about that kid either," Oh his blood was on fire, now; fuck a spectacle, Rick was going to die in that basement. "The only thing you care about is this bat," "What the fuck!?" "You can't even save that... I'll make you a deal. I'll let you kiss her goodbye."

"Don't you touch her!!" Negan roared; he could hear the near silent splash of liquid, the flick of a lighter. Then the basement seemed to glow as the worst happened; Lucille had become a fiery torch. Negan's body acted on its own, flying from his hiding place as the dead became alerted to the sudden heat and life in the room; they came filtering in for their next meal. Rick, ever the genius, thought his best course of action was to start swinging Lucille haphazardly, unwittingly setting the walking corpses on fire; like they weren't dangerous enough already.

"Come and get 'er!" Rick taunted, somehow still blindly self assured. Negan came at him with a full force tackle, somehow not catching fire himself though completely horrified at the sight of his Lucille; it was something out of a scary movie, the blaze burning bright on her end.

"You get your hands off her," He growled, though having to dodge as Rick swung at him again, barely scrambling out of the way and into the arms of a hungry corpse. He fought it away, inadvertently kicking open a door that allowed even more dead to sidle in. Rick was in a hurry to create more undead bonfires, the starving bodies groping at them both through the flames; Negan had to get that bat away from him, for both their safeties. "Psychopath, you're gonna kill us both!"

"As long as it's you first." Rick was really off the deep end now; he wasn't taking into account his people, his own son, alive but for the grace of Negan. He was a man obsessed; and Negan had to get out of there. Kicking away the dead that he could, he chanced another tackle; this one took Rick down, enough to wrestle him away from the still flaming bat and make his move. He wasn't running, he was regrouping; and he had his own men to punish now. Rick wasn't completely out yet though. As Negan swung and slammed his way through the dead, Rick threw his body into his; Negan's sore muscles smashing into a blacked out window. 'Finally a fucking break!' He kicked Rick back, letting him deal with the dead as trusty Lucille smashed through the blackened glass, enough for him to make a run for it.

He was still dizzied, sore, and panting; but he'd got away. The world spun a little in the sunlight, smoke pouring from the building that somehow now looked unfamiliar. 'Let Rick die in there,' He prayed to himself. 'I got to get back, deal with Simon, get to Delle--' and then the world went dark, his vision fuzzing around a familiar face that knocked him out. 'Fuck.'

_________________________________

Negan was dead. Or gone at least. That was the company line; decreed by Simon, and his new right hand man, Dwight. As they continued their voyage to Hilltop, plan slightly tweaked despite having no earthly idea of Negan's whereabouts or being alive at all, he felt cautiously optimistic. Negan wasn't the man to lead the Saviors anymore; he'd devoted himself too deeply to breaking the Alexandrians and the others when they could've simply done away with them and found new people. 'Resources my left ass cheek, we're plenty resourceful!'
They'd do exactly that; the new modus operandi was to wipe Hilltop and all those there off the face of the earth. Once they were all worm food, they could focus on finding new communities, new, more malleable people to 'save'. It would be a paradise; and Dwight and Simon were going to run it right. It hadn't taken much convincing to sway the scarred blond to his way of thinking; he'd hated Negan since the moment he took his wife, since the burn. What had taken more talking was getting Dwight to agree to not kill Delle on sight once they returned to Sanctuary.

It rubbed him the wrong way that he still held a soft spot for the woman; she'd used him like a six-foot-three sex toy, she'd lied to him, all but stomped on his heart. By all rights and reasoning he should've been first in line to execute her the minute they came back; but he liked her. She was likeable, the little bitch; and maybe he still held onto the hope he could sway her again. Old flames could burn bright and hot, but there had to have been a cause for its initial extinguishing; he just had to remind her why it hadn't worked in the first place, and he'd have her crawling back. It wasn't like the big bad boss was around to argue his own defense, after all.

'She'll see the light; she has before,' He smirked under his mustache, wondering if this was how Negan felt; supreme and confident. All powerful. Omnipotent. 'She'll do it again. We'll find the right people to serve us, get this new world order back in order,' the sun was beginning to set outside the vehicle, the paths to Hilltop clear and open. 'And I'll kill that prick kid as soon as we're square.' "It's a brand new day."

Chapter End Notes

Why yes I did Google Steven ogg's height just to call him a sex toy.

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU! ♡♡♡♡
Before...

Delle took a few deep breaths, her head between her knees on a park bench. Her fingers were woven in her hair, waiting for what felt like years outside of the hospital. Fang was running late, and she knew she couldn’t do it without him; she wouldn’t. He already knew what their task was for the day - she’d told him right after the phone call - she didn’t blame him for dragging his feet. But she wasn’t going to do it by herself. She needed her brother.

"Delle?" She looked up to find Fang’s face, puffy and slick with tears, clearly a little out of breath. ‘Did he run all the way here?’ "H-have you gone in yet?"

"Not yet," she replied, rubbing her hand across the back of her neck. "Was waitin' for you before I went n' talked to them."

His face was a white sheet, understandably frightened. "I... I don't know if I can go in," he admitted hoarsely, ashamed. "But I'll give it a try."

She rubbed her eyes with fingertips; she hadn't slept since that phone had rang. "Let's do this."

They checked in at the hospital help desk; the policy on viewing a body in the morgue was having a representative come to escort them. It wasn't much more waiting, but it too felt like forever.

"Adelaide Cornish?" A middle aged woman in a business suit came up to them, a look of sympathy on her face.

'You wouldn't look like that if you knew him.' She thought bitterly. Another breath. "That's me," she confirmed, standing from the hard plastic waiting room seat. "Please, call me Delle. My brother, Eric." He stood dutifully and said hello, offering a tear moistened handshake.

"Hello," the woman fidgeted; this didn't happen much in small towns. "I'm sorry to call you in under these circumstances, but we needed someone to identify the body--"

"Right," it wasn't that she was trying to be rude; she just wanted the entire ordeal over and done with. Dead and buried. "Can I... can we see him now?"

She glanced to Fang from behind her glasses. "Generally we don't let minors in the medical examiner's room," she said slowly; Delle could feel the relief washing over her brother as her own nerves wound tighter. "I can have someone keep an eye on him, while we do this..."

"He'll be good on his own; he's a big boy," she turned and gave him a nod. He plopped back into his seat, digging a text book from his bag; mid-spring exams were around the corner, he had to study. Even at the most inopportune times. "Let's get this over with."

The walls and floors seemed to become a more bleak white with every passing foot; the doors colder
against her hands as she pushed them open. 'This is fine; I'll figure this out.' She recited it over and over again as they stopped before a set of double doors; the sign to the left read 'private morgue'. Somehow she felt like everyone was already in on their privacy.

"Are you ready?" The woman - Ms.Ackerly - prompted her one last time; this wasn't for the weak of heart, and for someone so young...

"I'm good to go. Just want this in my past," Delle steeled herself for what she was about to lay eyes on. Ms.Ackerly opened the door carefully, letting Delle step through into the cold, almost freezing room, moving to the row on row of identical cooling drawers along the wall. She gave her another look before stopping at one, her hand on the grip. "Please, let's just... I need to see him."

The woman nodded, engaging the handle and sliding out the rolling stretcher inside, just far enough to reveal the head and shoulders of the shrouded body inside. Delle licked her dry lips with a drier tongue, nodding to the hospital rep; she took her cue and pulled back the sheet. Even with her hard demeanor, Delle was shaken; she'd never been so close to a corpse before. The eyes were shut, but the skin was nearly blue and horribly weathered; likely from being left frozen in a ditch for the past few weeks. It seemed to be shrivelling, wrinkling on decaying bone and muscle. In death, his sandy blond hair looked like old straw, nearly stark white.

Her father had seen better days.

"Hey Dad," she murmured, unaware her fingernails were digging into the elbows of her jacket. "You've looked better."

"We've been holding his remains here awhile," Ms.Ackerly explained, clearly unwilling to look at the body. "He was found during that heatwave a few weeks ago; snow melted enough to find him."

"Mm," Delle, on the other hand, couldn't take her eyes off of him. She was used to watching him, staying on her toes to avoid a screaming match or a beating. For the first time in her life, she was in the presence of her father with absolutely no fear of pain. She didn't know how she was supposed to be feeling; he'd been horrible to her for most of her life, and yet he'd been consistent. At least in disappointment. "How'd he die?"

"Well the deceased was fairly deteriorated by the time he was found," she offered. "But based on wear and tear as well as stomach contents, our best guess is he was extremely inebriated and wound up falling unconscious in the snow," she shook her head in a pitying manner. "The elements did the rest from there."

She nodded; none of it was all that shocking. The drinking was bound to do him in eventually, it was really just a matter of what exactly did it. She had always bet on it being a failed liver; death from exposure was a surprise. "What happens now?"

"We can sign the remains into your care, have him moved to a funeral home of your choosing--"

"Don't have the cash for that whole song and dance," she wasn't about to be ashamed over that - she had to worry about the living. "What else?"

Ackerly looked disturbed; but again, she hadn't know the man. "You... well, his remains are in no state for any donation. We can send him to be cremated, but that'll still run about 1000$."

"Yeah, that's out." She relied flatly.
Ackerly made that same sour face again. "If... if there's no other option, he'll be turned over to the state," she cast an eye over the near frozen body. "There's a chance he'll be donated to medical science... but it's more likely he'll get a paupers' grave."

'Seems appropriate.' Adelaide William Cornish had been a thorn in his daughter's eye for her entire life. She'd overcome her hate for him to allow her brother's safety; but he couldn't hurt or threaten them anymore. No more pretending. "Option three works."

Ackerly gawked, but gave a slight nod, as if the possibility of a deadbeat parent was totally unbelievable. "Okay... would you like a moment alone with the body?"

Delle blinked, a little lost on the question. She'd never wanted alone time with her father - the less time spent with him the better - but this, this was the very last time she'd ever set eyes on him. She couldn't pass that up. "Sure."

Ackerly waddled out quickly, saying she had a few forms to sign off on in the case of abandonment; Delle's eyes were still on the body below her. Mother nature had done quite the number on him; his thin body was practically twigs wrapped in wet paper, and there was clear damage where the frost and cold had burnt his skin. She didn't dare touch him, a little illogical fear telling her he'd wake up and smack her if she did, but she did speak.

"You motherfucking deadbeat asswad of a man," she hissed. "Not even a man; just a fucking animal. I don't know what I did to make you hate me so much, to make me become who I am now - and hell, now I'll never know - but that's hunky fucking dory if I never have to hear your voice again," her own voice cracked as the tears got started; relief, freedom, mourning, fear. "You'll never hit me again. You'll never make me feel like less than anyone else again. You'll never be around to steal my happiness again," she rubbed her red leather sleeve across her eyes, her nose. "I... I'm finally free from you. From everything that you were. And the world's already looking brighter without you in it. Fuck you, Dad. Fuck you."

Her signature was wild but legible across the abandonment paperwork, and with the last dotted 'i' she was storming out, grabbing Fang on her way.

"Delle?" He sniffled, standing to meet her. "Are you okay? Is it... is it really him?"

She gave a little jerk of her head, her brother barely stifling a sob. He knew the terror their father so often brought down on her head, and he wouldn't be missed, per se - but he was still his dad. His eyes were welling up with massive teardrops, and Delle couldn't stand to see that; she tugged him close, pulling him into the tightest hug possible as he sobbed into her shoulder. It was an emotional day all around. "It's gonna be okay, kiddo," she whispered, stroking his sandy hair. "I'll get shit figured out, everything will be fine."

He didn't say much, but her promises did little to alleviate his fears; their father and his constant ineptitude and threats were all that kept Delle from packing up in the middle of the night and hightailing it as far from him as possible. With him gone, the town-long leash he'd had clamped around her neck all her life was gone; she finally had the freedom to go wherever she pleased, and never think about that terrible town again. Trouble was, with all the fucked up shit that had gone on in their lives in the last year alone, Fang wasn't sure that if she did run, she'd bother taking him along. He knew very well who she wanted to ride off into the sunset with.

"C-can we go home?" He chose to say instead. He had to have faith that his sister loved him enough
not to leave, even with all the trauma of that year. He hoped he could at least complete his education in his hometown, if she'd let him; but if it came down to it, would she run? "W-we can still go back home, right?" The apartment had been in her father's name, and she'd need to look into getting her own on the lease; but that was something for the morning.

"Of course, champ," she smiled as best she could, ruffling his hair. "Let's go home. I'll make you some dinner and we'll talk," she held his hand tight as they walked out of the hospital, pausing at the park bench. "Um... if it's okay I need to make a call, alright?"

His heart twisted - was she really trying to run off that fast? - but he nodded, falling into the bench as she stepped away, near a grassy patch of the grounds that long term patients could use for sunshine. *Please don't leave me, sis.* He prayed as he watched her dial his number.

Her mouth still felt dry as she raised the receiver to her ear, listening to it ring; as with every call she made to Negan, it didn't ring long.

"Hey, sweetheart," his warm drawl on the other end had her muscles relaxing and then tensing for new reasons. "How's my favorite girl?"

"Hi Negan," the way she spoke immediately put him on edge; her usual razor sharp tongue was missing, as was the flirt in her voice. "I, uh... can I see you tomorrow?" It was nearly Saturday, it would work.

"Sure, baby," he sounded inquisitive now. "What's wrong? You don't sound like you."

She didn't mean to -- but the words just spewed out, like she had no control. "My dad's dead."

At that same time, in the same hospital, Lucille's life was getting exponentially worse.

And considerably shorter.

When they called her in, so incredibly apologetic, she already had a sinking feeling. The doctor had no idea how he'd missed it. They ran so many tests checking the viability of her uterus, nobody had bothered looking elsewhere; but now, what had begun in her heart was spreading, cloudy spots appearing all over her organs on scans, each one another minute, hour, day, week off her life. She'd heard the words before, on hospital dramas and murmured at doctor's offices; 'malignant', 'metastatic', 'stage four'. She'd just never thought they'd be used on her.

The staff had promised they'd do all they could, they'd fight the disease with every method available; but it still felt hopeless. She was outside the oncology unit now, optimistic brochures for her dire situation in hand, staring at Negan's cell number on her phone. *I need him,* she thought to herself, hands shaking as she pressed 'call'. *I can't do this on my own... I need him.* The tears began to fall as she raised the phone to her ear; only to be met with a busy signal and a dial tone.

She'd been pushed aside; but she needed him. If she stood any chance at surviving the fight ahead of her, she needed the right people at her side; and to her mind, that meant Negan. Damn the life he kept trying to start with that young girl, damn her for occupying his attentions; but at that moment, Delle was her best shot. Negan wouldn't go back to Lucille, not with Delle around.

What she had to do was convince Delle to no longer be around. It was her only shot. She needed him more than Delle ever would; she had to see the light.
...only a few more chapters set in the past, folks. The end is nigh.

What did ya'll think here?? Leave me a comment! Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU! ♡♡♡♡
It did not go well.

Hilltop had been prepared for their attack; and had given almost as well as got. An even chunk of Saviors had fallen to their weaponry, and even with the hits they had managed to land, they were doubling back on retreat within the hour. Running was the only choice they had.

Dwight wasn't happy; but Simon was furious. This was not how he'd seen his first outing as the new Negan going; the plan was to put them down, and even with all their poisoned bullets injuring a number of the enemy populace, he knew it wasn't enough. They still had enough people; they could still come back fighting.

This meant hurrying back to Sanctuary and getting everyone on the same page - or else. As far as everybody on the away team was concerned, Negan was dead - and everybody else would believe it too. He'd need to kick Eugene into high gear, get the bullet makers going twice as fast, figure out a better plan of attack for next time, maybe arm some of the healthier workers. If they could hold a gun they'd be coming out.

He knew he was going to off the kid; he was looking forward to it. Carl was getting the blatantly public death he deserved, the one Negan failed to accomplish - mind you that was mostly on the fault of the tiger - and it would set things back on track. His would be the first execution in the mass extinction of the entire militia; no man, woman or child would be walking away with a beating heart. This was how things got done; fuck second chances. They needed to reset.

Delle had a sour feeling in her chest when she'd woke that morning; something just didn't feel right. She felt like she was wading through some kind of oozing muck with every step she took, and every bite of food tasted flavorless. 'Something is wrong,' she was certain of it, and knew Negan lay at the center of it all. 'I should've gone with him.' That feeling turned into an all-encompassing, ice cold dread when she saw his convoy rolling through the gates - with his car nowhere in sight. From Negan's windows she watched as a significantly less number of Saviors left the trucks, her stomach twisting when she saw Simon and Dwight barking orders.

'That bastard,' she felt tears pricking at her eyes, trying to swallow them down. 'If that bastard went and died on me, I swear I'll kill him,' she wondered what they had planned for her; Dwight would want her dead, Simon might see her tortured. Neither were good choices. She let her hands rest on her stomach, shaking her head and feeling shame. 'Sorry kid; looks like your boat might be capsizing.' If they had plans to kill her, she wouldn't make it easy. She set Fang, unsheathed, on the bed by her side; they could come to her. She wouldn't walk willingly into her death.

It surprised her when a calm, courteous knock fell on the door. She didn't expect a hangman to be so accommodating.

"Delle?" That was Simon's voice, talking in that gentle tone he always seemed to hide. "You're in there, right? We gotta talk."

'Do we now?′ She licked at her lips with a dry tongue, drawing herself up to her full, tiny height
before stepping to the door. "Is it just you, Si?"

"Just me. Cross my heart," her fingertips rested on the door knob, mulling over letting him in or forcing him to break down the door. "Could you open up, please?"

She finally relented, twisting the handle and letting the door swing free; he hadn't bothered to change from the evening's escapades, spatters of blood gracing his clothes, the smell of gunsmoke and sweat seeped into them. The scents - ones she'd normally be fine with - now had her holding back vomit. 'Fucking hormones.' "What's goin' on, Simon?"

He wore an apologetic look on his face, though somehow it didn't feel very honest. "I... I got some bad news for you, hon'," he muttered, his deep brown eyes dropping to the floor. "Negan... there was an accident."

She took a sharp breath, the admission of what had happened was a knife in her heart. "Who killed him?" She asked, surprising herself by the ice in her tone.

"We're not sure," he rubbed at his mustache, stroking down to his chin. "Some asshole ran him off the road; by the time we found his car it was a damn fireball," he met her eyes again, seeing clearly the agony he was causing; and oh if that wasn't just a little bit satisfying. "When we finally saw his body... best we could do was put him down quickly."

'Fucking Negan,' she wasn't going to collapse, cave in on her own grief in front of Simon; he'd enjoy that too much. 'How could he go and die on me?'

'So... what happens now?' She said softly, keeping proud eye contact. "Should I march my ass down to the cells? Or does Dwight get first shot at me?"

Simon's tongue ran over his lip, letting his eyes study her form; even in the too big tshirt, her body was curving in all the right ways. He'd seen ever nook and crevice first hand of course... and he could stand to see them again. "That doesn't have to happen, Twisted," he purred.

"Oh fuck. 'She cursed inwardly. "I'm sure we can work out something that's... mutually beneficial."

She took a step backwards, closer to Fang; only for him to follow with his own feet. "What're you talkin' about?"

"Well darlin', I'm head honcho around here now," she hated the smirk playing in his handsome features; it didn't feel like him at all. "And you and I... we had a good thing goin' for awhile there; before the posthumous boss threw off our groove."

She could feel a cold sweat beginning to break out on her skin. "N-Negan and I--"

"You had history, I know," he raised his hands in a seeming surrender, only for one of them to shoot out and grasp her wrist. "Still pretty dickish of you not to tell me," he glowered, his fingers stroking her palm, her knuckles. "But we got history now too, Twisted - and old flames can burn white hot."

She was actively suppressing the fear in her skin; none of this felt like Simon. The man she'd known had been sweet to her, kind; but given how comfortable he seemed now, maybe that version had been the lie. "I-I don't know if I can do that, Si..."

"I don't think you'd like the alternative," his grip grew crushingly tight, all warmth vacating his eyes. "I love that pretty smile... and I'd hate to rip your teeth out," he drew himself in nearer, his other hand
cupping her cheek. "And those eyes are fuckin' mesmerizing; I don't want to gouge them out," his face was incredibly close to hers now; and when once she would've closed that gap with a kiss, now all she wanted to do was punch him. "And I know how talented that sweet pink tongue is... don't need to cut that out of your mouth either. So if I can give you some advice; take option A."

Her grief was mixing with fierce, full blown rage; Fang wasn't that far away, she stood a decent chance of reaching him in time. Simon though was fast, considerably bigger than her, and those threats sounded far from empty. It wasn't just herself to concern herself with now either; that life growing in her would start showing soon, so she'd need to think quickly. And it's so much easier to think when one's not being tortured. "O-okay," she murmured, her voice betraying her with a quiver. "Option A."

"Perfect," he grinned; it was still an attractive grin, but to her it felt like an animal bearing its teeth. "Give your new husband a kiss then, darlin'. He's missed you."

Again she fought back the urge to vomit, summoning up her courage and strength; she just had to survive long enough to escape. If that meant a kiss here and there, she could deal. She raised herself on her toes, closing that distance as her lips fell flush to his; chaste at first, but he changed that quickly as he grasped the back of her neck, her mouth opening with the push of his tongue, starved for her taste that she'd held him away from. He was still a talented kisser, his second hand gripping her hair as he tilted her slightly, opening up wider to practically swallow her whole. She damned herself for whimpering.

"That's my smart girl," he whispered, pulling away. Her face was a mask but he could still see the fear past her eyes. "Go on down to the old wives' quarters and get changed. I'm sure there's still a nice wardrobe to choose from."

She'd become a wife after all.

Negan's head was whirling from multiple knockouts, at least one a straight up concussion. Wherever he was, it was pitch dark, he was strapped down to something, and he could smell the stink of garbage. If he had to guess, he was at the Scavenger home base.

Or what it used to be.

If Rick was to be believed, the Scavengers were all but eliminated from the playing field; all at Simon's trigger happy hand. The time Negan spent awake he spent cursing his second-in-command; he'd lied, let his temper control his choices, and through his actions had got him captured. He'd royally fucked him over, and God help him if he laid a hand on Delle in his absence. He was still going to get back to her; it'd just take a little longer than expected. His family needed him, and though he knew she could handle herself for awhile, when that baby started to show Simon wouldn't react in any positive way.

Light came streaming into his surroundings; it stung his eyes a moment as the tall, deer like figure over him became clearer. Jadis. "What the shit?" He was still fairly disoriented, but he never took her as capable of this. "No, really, just tell me," she grabbed hold of a rope at his feet; apparently he was on some kind of dolly. "What the shit?!"

Jadis, already a woman of few words, didn't speak at all. She didn't look like herself - dressed in
plaid and pants, a change for her - and set him to be still at an open clearing. He'd seen it before; then teeming with other Scavengers, it seemed now only haunted by the memories of who once were there. A fire burned in an oil drum, all of her earthly possessions - mostly guns - sat by it. Even over the stench of garbage, the eye-stinging odor of blood and smoke was thick. Horrible things had happened.

"I smell it," Negan craned his neck to look at her, who merely stared before she set to work at her following task. "Whatever the holy hell happened here, I smell it. That's what that fire is about, that salt, burning it away. I told you, people are a resource. I don't throw resources like that away," he tried not to react as she wheeled over a grotesque living corpse, skewered and arched on a similar dolly, mouth aching to bite. 'Don't get distracted now.' "I got a lot of confidence that most people can be put on the right path. My path. I wouldn't have killed all your people - no - that was the work of someone not following the program. But this?" He gestured to the emptiness that surrounded them, the silence deafening. "This is my mistake. I'll own this. I took a chance on someone, thought I was doing the right thing, and all I did was punch myself in the dick. I am sorry for this. I really am. I'm sorry that you lost all you had. But I know, in some way, I can help get it back--"

She smacked him again and screamed in agony, rather than listen to more of his lies. 'Should've gagged me if she didn't want to hear me talk.'

"C'mon Jadis, we can get this place back in shape, can't we?" He pleaded, the strange woman gathering together what appeared to be photographs, arranging them at his side; apparently she wanted him to face the lives he'd indirectly ended. 'That's what I get for sending Simon.' "I know nothin' will make up for the family you lost - again, I am painfully sorry for that - but I've got my own family to think about here!" she turned her back just long enough for him to grab at the bag of ammo; but what fell loose was a flare. That might just get him out alive.

He snapped it to life, the signal burning bright red; his only choice was to threaten the photos. "Look, whatever you're doing you must not really want to do it 'cause if you did, you wouldn't have left me sitting here with a bag full of guns," he breathed a little relief at the desperation on her face; she was listening now. "I don't want to do this either, but I have to get back to my girl, n' I gotta think these snaps are near and dear. So let's have a chat - let the healing begin."

Jadis was in active fear; those photos were all she had left of the people who'd become her family. "P-please, leave those pictures alone."

"I figured they meant something to you. Especially considering this is it, right? I mean, it's not like you can just pop around the corner and order yourself some prints. So I'm gonna ask you one more time; what the fuck? I mean, this," he gestured to the disgusting monster she'd somehow made worse. "This is how you kill people? With that thing? Slowly? No. People are a resource."

"Move the flare away," her voice had a serious edge now; she produced her ace in the hole. She pulled Lucille from a trash heap, and held his beloved bat over the oil fire. "Please. They're all I have left - they're all this place has left. You took my world, everything. You took away me!!" She screamed the last words, ready to drop the bat in. "Why should you get off without any pain!?!"

He licked his lips, eyes darting to his bat and back to Jadis. "I've got plenty pain," he strained, preparing to open up. "My... my wife's name was Lucille. I did her wrong, so, so often and she still wanted me, even when I stopped wantin' her," he could see her last moments in his mind, the cancer having robbed her of everything that was uniquely her. "I went n' fell in love when I shouldn't have, but damn if she isn't the world to me... it was pain, tryin' to turn away from her, give Lucille what she needed - but I've got another chance now, a chance you'll give back to me if you let me be," he
swallowed down all his pride - a gargantuan gulp - and met her eyes. "Burn that bat if it'll make you feel better. But let me get back to her."

Jadis didn’t have time to be shocked; the air was suddenly filled with a sound so completely foreign Negan couldn't believe his ears. Helicopter blades. "What the fuck?" He murmured, seeing the flying machine crest over the landfill; he might as well have been looking at a dragon with how mythic it felt. Negan had no idea what was happening; and he felt small for it.

"Please!! Please I'm here! I'm here!!" Jadis shrieked up to the sky; that had been the purpose for the flare. With it used up, the copter assumed the worse and was gone almost as fast as it had appeared. Negan barely had a moment to react as she was screaming again, raising Lucille overhead to knock him dead.

"No - no, don't! Don't! I-I didn't burn your pictures," he chuckled the flare as far away as he could manage, hands raised in surrender. "I didn't do it; I wouldn't. Please, I... I'm gonna be a father," it was a last ditch effort, but the last possible chance he had. "Please, you kill me and you'll only have worse to deal with."

"No, I get to hurt you!" She sobbed, Lucille trembling in her hands.

"I didn't do this," he repeated, praying for a miracle. "But I can settle it. I swear on my sack, I will. You let me go and take that bat with me and I will settle it. Okay?" She was lowering the bat. "Okay?"

She collapsed to her knees, fullbody sobs wracking her body. Negan's own eyes were tearful, but it seemed his life was safe for now. He'd got that miracle.

Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry I had to do this to you, Simon.

Thanks for sticking with my ramblings guys :) I know I've been going on forever, but I really appreciate ya'll who are still keepin' up with me.

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU! ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 109

Delle was having problems of her own. The first - and least life threatening - had to be the dress.

She'd seen Tanya wear it a handful of times - the wives had indeed boasted a wide collection of frocks - and it seemed like the best choice. Short, flared and black, as all the dresses were, it had a higher neckline and full sleeves; albeit made of translucent black lace. It disguised the scarring well enough, and she didn't want Simon having the satisfaction of eying her assets whenever he pleased. It was as much of a protest as she could manage.

She'd never been so tall on black stilleto heels, carefully teetering her way around; she saw no reason to conduct herself differently aside from wearing the dress. For every Savior she passed she got a highly confused look. Nobody had expected to see her in such a state. She looked as out-of-place as all the wives had, and she felt so too.

Simon had left Negan's quarters - he had no plans to take them, too many bad memories - in favor of the council room, sharing a few words with Dwight.

"Why bother keepin' her alive?" The blond asked, yet again. His hate for Delle ran deep; in his eyes she'd caused the deaths of his whole family. Why should she be allowed to keep breathing?

"What can I say, I still feel for her," Simon shrugged, tapping his fingers against a glass of tequila. "She'll come around. I mean, she came crawling back to Negan with all the fucked up shit he's done; she'll be fallin' back into my bed before the end of the week."

Dwight grimaced in response. "Can't imagine sticking my dick in that," he shuddered for good measure. "Even if she hadn't been with him, she's just... disgusting."

"Hey now, that's my new wife you're talking about," he was mostly joking; he he wasn't looking to be questioned so early in his reign. "She'll get with the program; she's smart enough not to go with the other option."

"Right," Dwight rolled his eyes, wishing he could enact the other option himself; but he had bigger things to worry about. His deal with Alexandria and its forces still stood; and he needed to get the next move to them before Simon could make it. "So... what's the plan?"

"The plan is erasure," Simon replied, sipping at his drink. "The whole militia, removed and deleted from this earth. Full stop. Maybe we'll hold onto a handful of the sheepish ones, replenish the working class here," he ran his tongue over his lower lip; he couldn't help the power exciting him. "But anyone who raised a gun to us, they're fuckin' gone."

Dwight nodded curtly; that was something, but he needed exact details. "What're you thinkin'?"
Another night attack?

"Oh my no," Simon chuckled. "Broad damn daylight. We're gonna take the kid, rough him up a little, and head out to the Hilltop. Safe enough distance, let their scouters see him with a gun to his head. Lure out daddy dearest, the Widow; make it look like a trade. Then, when we have a good enough shot," he pointed his index finger like a gun, simulating the sound. "We off the kid, then those two fuckheads to boot."

Dwight supressed a nervous gulp, nodding slow; if he acted quickly, he might get the info to Hilltop in time. He had no idea how the kid would make it out alive, though; but there was bound to be collateral damage. It was unavoidable. "Sounds good, boss. When?"

"Mm, with all the hits we landed last night, they're probably dealing with a biter infestation; so that gives us a little time. Couple of days, get Eugene to supply us with some fresh artillery; we'll be good to go." Simon was embarrassingly confident.

A knock at the doors ceased their conversation, Delle wobbling her way in, dressed to the nines of semi formal absurdity. "H-hi."

"Oh look at you!" Simon laughed in a mirthless way, throwing his arms wide as he stood to meet her. "My wife looks fuckin' beautiful, doesn't she Dwight?"

As she met Simon's arms she glanced to the gnarled man; he still glared fiercely at her, burning a hole through her with his stare. "Mm."

"Eh you're such a wet blanket," Simon said dismissively, leaning his lips to Delle's ear. "Keep this little get up on when we fuck tonight."

Months ago she would've gladly agreed - maybe even dug up a pair of fishnets to go with the look - but now she could only resist throwing up across the conference table. "Sure, Si." She didn't even bother to meet his eye.

"Let's get the message out to the men," he jerked his head to Dwight, who stood. "Get everybody ready for this play."

"Sure," he replied, still sour at Delle. "I'm going to scout for outlying Saviors; get the word out."

"Sounds good, D," Delle was anxious for him to leave; she planned on letting Simon in on Dwight's double crossing. She hoped he would see her value in that, help to keep her neck unwrung; but as Dwight left, Simon's hands snaked up under her skirt, thumbs ghosting over the lines of her panties on her ass. "You look absolutely mouthwatering, Twisted."

Before he could kiss her again she pressed her hands to his chest in pause. "Simon, there's something you need to--"

"Hush, girlie," he commanded, dark in his eyes as he turned her to the table top, pressing her back enough to sit on the surface. "I've got things handled here. You don't have to worry your pretty little head about the outside anymore."

He'd effectively made her a prisoner within Sanctuary's walls; what Negan had sworn not to do, Simon did comfortably. "I-I just -- Dwight--"
"I said hush," he growled, hands rising up to cradle her face. "I don't want to hear any other man's name on your lips again, comprende? You're mine; that's all you concern yourself with now," his eyes dropped slowly, smiling down at her svelte figure all in black. "Christ I missed you, psycho... missed these," she screwed her eyes shut as his large hands palmed her tits, squeezing a little harder than she would've liked. "And this," she nearly kicked him as he cupped her sex through her skirt, but couldn't find her shivering in terror. He took it as her being turned on. "I'm gonna fuck you raw tonight, baby," he husked into her ear, nipping the lobe. "Know you wanted that; feelin' me come inside you. Gonna get your wish."

"S-sure, Si," she whispered, resisting the urge to try and hit him; she had a feeling he'd hit back twice as hard. "I... I'm going to see about arranging the wives' quarters for myself."

"Look at you, takin' initiative," he praised, stringing his hand through her hair as he guided her in for another kiss; her nails bit into her palms as she clenched her fists. "I know this isn't the life you saw for yourself, but let's try n' make the best of a bad situation, hm?"

She nodded and swallowed thickly, forcing on a tight smile as she left him be. She was indeed heading to the wives' quarters, but hardly to do redecorating; she'd heard Simon's plans loud and clear, and it would be a cold day in hell before she let him kill Carl. She had planning to do.

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Carl was leafing through the yearbook he'd found underneath Delle's former bed; it was seemingly the only personal item she'd kept in her tiny home. It definitely wasn't hers - all the autographs were to someone named Crystal - but she must've had it for a reason. He guessed it was something involving one damaged page, clearly having been soaked and dried more than once; it was a photo page, but he wasn't sure who on it was her interest. He was staring at the faces of the teens, likely long dead, when heavy banging came from outside the door; it was the first activity he'd heard in days. With a little more rummaging around, the door finally opened to Delle, looking entirely unlike Delle.

"W-what the hell are you wearing?" Was Carl's first question; the black dress looked so wrong on her figure. It simply wasn't what she was made for. But his eyes bugged at the blood spackling her face and arms, as well as the hunting knife in her hand. "What did you do?"

She'd done plenty. She knew Negan would've stashed extra protection around his room; so her first stop was combing through the shelves, sofa cushions and beneath his bed for something to kill with. The hunting knife she'd found duct taped under the night stand - so resourceful, he was. Then it was a matter of taking down the right people.

There was a man guarding the door to Carl's prison; she barely knew him, his name might've been Dylan, but it didn't matter. He wouldn't be living much longer. He was one of Simon's, and decided distracted as she slipped off her heels, stalking from the closest corner on her bare feet, silent as the night; right until she jammed the blade into the watchman's temple, his body smacking the door with a noisy thud. Then it was just the lock; which she thankfully held the combination to.

"Get your runnin' legs on, kid," she ordered, dashing to her dresser; it still contained most of her clothes, including a heavy black hoodie she'd used to hide things before. This time, it would have to hide a whole identity. "We're bustin' you out of here."

"What!?" Not that he was complaining, he was eager to leave the enemy camp; but Delle was the
last person who needed to be fearful in that place. It scared him to see her so frazzled. "What the hell? Are you-- Did Negan--"

She felt an icy spike through her heart at his name, but clenched her fists in strength. 'Focus now, gotta keep moving.' "Negan's gone," she muttered, throwing Carl the sweatshirt. "Simon's in charge now; and he wants you dead. So put this shit on and let's get the fuck out of here."

He gawked a moment but as she clapped her hands, he snapped into action. He his the stetson between his layers as he pulled on the garment, a normal fit on him, and tugged up the hood; it wasn't perfect, but it would have to do. "H-how'd he die?"

She sighed, not thrilled to discuss it. "Car ran him off the road," she spoke quietly, ducking out of the room for a second before becoming Carl out with her. "Simon had to put him down. Help me move this guy," With her less than healthy form she could only push as Carl dragged the body back into his makeshift cell. Once hidden she took the guns off of him, the rifle going to Carl and the handgun going to her; she had no other option than to hold it at her back. "Walk behind me, like you're guarding me. And I swear to God if you shoot me I'll put a bullet between your eyes," she paused. "Well, eye and hole."

"Fine," he nodded, tucking his chin low as they marched along; he had no alternative than to trust the woman, praying that she wasn't just leading him to an ambush. "Why... why are you dressed like a wife, though?"

She shook her head, her eyes raking the ceiling. "Simon has some idea of me being his now," her fingertips traced her stomach for a moment. "It's safer to play along until I've got a plan in mind. And unfortunately this play has costumes."

He wasn't unaware of the sway of her hips in the swishy little skirt, but it didn't look like the woman who'd made herself feared on the outside. It was like a stranger with her voice. "You could come with me," he suggested, quietly, as they passed another Savior. He didn't even bat an eye. "My dad will know you saved me, it'll be alright--"

"And the baby?" She hissed, barely a sound from in front of him. "He'll know it's Negan's, through and through; and I don't think he wants any piece of Negan alive."

Carl went silent; he'd been certain of himself before, but Rick was obsessed now. Would she truly be safe? Would she ever be safe anywhere?

She lead them outside; to the vehicle lot. His best odds would be to take one of the inconspicuous black sedans, ride off into the night. "You can drive, right kid?"

Even in the low light of the setting sun, she could see his cheeks pinking up. "Yes-- I mean, kind of..."

"Just get there without crashing," she muttered, opening up the driver side door. "So far as I know everybody is at Hilltop; if you find a way to stop this, try n' reach me. I'll do what I can here."

Carl stared, nonplussed and as bewildered at her as ever. She was an anomaly in a world of cut throat killers, following a path unset by her superiors, one she didn't even seem to know all the steps to yet; but she was saving him. It was more than he could ever ask for, particularly from the opposing team.
"Delle, I--"

"Hold it right goddamn there," matching chills washed their skins as a familiar, hollow voice rang out from behind a truck; Dwight circled out, his crossbow aimed and at the ready; he'd come back from ratting out Simon's plan. *Shit shit motherfucking ass fuck shit!* "What the hell are you doin' you crazy bitch?"

She raised her hand slowly, still palming the gun with her other. "Dwight, please," she begged, sensing Carl's nervousness behind her. "I know you want this over with; I know you've been workin' with the militia too. Let him go."

"I could kill you both right here," his finger was tensing around the bow trigger, eyes sharp as knives. "Sure it'd be tragic but at least there'd be a little justice in it. The world we're fighting for doesn't include you, Delle."

She licked her lips, brows tightly knit. "I don't blame you for thinkin' that," she acquiesced; his anger and grief had turned him, but surely not enough to kill the boy. "It... it doesn't have to. But this kid stands a shot at getting us - you guys - peace. He just needs to try."

Dwight's aim shifted between the two possible escapees; his vengeance was throbbing in his veins, but if Carl did really stand a chance of solving things...

"You can tell Simon I did this," she implored, shutting her eyes and trying to find serenity in herself. "Put the blame on me, but let Carl try and call off his father. Please Dwight," she implored him, nearly shaking like a leaf. "Not everyone needs to die."

The time it took Dwight to decide what to do felt like eternity; the air seeming to still and seconds slow, her heart pounding in her ears before he finally lowered the bow in agreement. She breathed a shaky sigh, moving to let Carl into the sedan. Dwight's hand was already gripping her arm tight.

"Get to Hilltop, Carl," she demanded, bright eyes boring into blue. "Stop this. Please." He could only nod - the words he wanted to say were escaping him - as he got the engine going, managing to slip through the gates without the guards realizing who exactly had just left. She watched and let tears fall, hoping that sparing his life would mean something better in her next one.

"C'mon," Dwight growled, ripping the handgun from her grasp and stuffing it in his jeans. He dragged her down an all too familiar route, one of cold concrete and bleak lighting, stumbling along in her dirt covered bare feet. He stopped at an empty cell, literally throwing her inside; he seemed like a black phantom in the doorway, the light darkening his already mean expression. "I'm not tellin' Si shit. You ran away with Carl."

"W-wait, what?" She stammered, her eyes adjusting.

"You ran off," he repeated. "And he'll never know you're just in a cell, least til it's too late. This is where you die," his voice was colder than winter on bare skin. "In the dark, all alone."

The door shut on Delle; and as they had the first night she'd been thrown in those cells, so many months ago, the tears fell.

Chapter End Notes
I know we're in a dark place right now, but this isn't the end!

Til then, please leave me comments, write me theories; can't wait to bring you all to the end.

♥♥♥♥♥
Chapter 110

Chapter Notes

Did you miss me? Cuz I sure missed you ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jadis - who’d since corrected her name to Anne - undid his knots with similar silence when the sobs finally ceased. "Thank you," Negan said in earnest, really grateful as he rubbed feeling back into his arms. "I will get shit solved for you. The ones who hurt you, they're gonna fuckin' pay."

"Mm," Anne mumbled, dropping to the ground near the dwindling flames. She gestured to a shabby, shorter pile of trash. "Jacket's over there."

"Thank you again, then," he didn't quite feel like himself without that. He took in the deserted surroundings, the dump now so clearly empty and isolating. "Y'know you could come on back with me," he offered, sliding into the leather. "Can always use a badass that can hold her own in my ranks. Get you out of here, back on the right path."

She scoffed and raised a brow. "Your path?"

He pumped his brows a moment before reconciling that she was not going with him; this was what she was used to, this was home. Even if her family was dead and done for. "Fair enough," he shrugged and tentatively wrapped his fingers around Lucille; she felt different, but he'd expected as much. He'd given the go-ahead to burn her, and it felt like a brand new betrayal; he'd earn her forgivenes with Simon's blood, though. "I'll get you your vengeance; and you know where I'll be, if you ever feel like rejoinin' society."

She looked him up and down, that angled brow perfectly arched in decision and skepticism. "Are you really going to be a father?"

He beamed - aside from taunting Rick, this was the first person he had shared the news with. "Sure am. Bun's hopefully still cookin' at home."

She let the silence hang in the air, her harsh reality glaring and blatant. "Remember," she advised - with her mysterious nature Negan was inclined to listen. "You must do more than love to protect them."

It was wise advice; words that Negan knew well already, but he accepted them graciously nonetheless. "Good tip," he nodded and swung Lucille up onto his shoulder. "If I can I'll let you know when I crush him. Maybe you can come watch."

The garbage dump looked almost like mountains in silhouette behind him, the orange of the setting sun casting a lively pallor over everything; even Negan, with murder on his mind. In the wake of the apocalypse he'd picked up many useful talents - one of which was hotwiring cars. He employed just that skill on finding the first empty old junker he found; he was in for a long ride back to Sanctuary, but with a still decent tank of gas, it would do the job.
'I'm comin' for you, Delle,' he swore oath after oath, racing along to try and undo whatever havoc Si had wreaked while he was indisposed. 'Just keep your ass alive, keep our kid safe; I'll do the rest.' The roads were nearly barren but for the odd abandoned vehicle and dead thing shambling around; nothing was out of the twisted ordinary for miles. It gave him time to wonder how he'd let things get so fucked up. Had he been wrong to allow Simon that second chance after Oceanside? Clearly so, the man was staging a coup. He wouldn't walk away from Sanctuary again, not living anyway. Dwight on the other hand... he knew he personally held most of the blame there. He'd reacted terribly to Delle's rejection and gone off the deep end with tyrannical power at his side. They did indeed deserve punishment for running, stealing medicine, but the Sherry of it all... it was a terrible call on his part. But turning to Rick the Prick's side of things!? Selling out the girl who was just trying to help? Those were far less forgivable. 'Both of those half-assed, limp dicked bastards are going to regret the day they were fucking born when I get back.' Zooming down the roads it was all he had in mind; though he nearly ran off the road at the sight of another car travelling in the other direction. When it slowed, so did he.

The last person he expected to step out of the driver's seat was Carl Grimes.

'What in the ass is happenin' to my empire!?' Negan strode out of the car as Carl jumped out, raising a rifle he knew was one of his to his head. "Carl, you're disappointin' me! I leave you alone and you go joyridin'?"

He gawked back at him like he'd suddenly grown a second head. "Y-you're supposed to be dead..."

"People keep sayin' that; and I keep defying expectations," he grinned, not completely thrilled at the aim on his eye. "I'm one hell of an over-achiever."

"No, I mean-- everyone at Sanctuary thinks you're dead," Carl's shot lowered slightly, but not far enough to be nonfatal. "Dwight and that mustached guy are in charge now."

"Fat fucking chance," he gave Carl a hard look, up and down. "How the hell did you weasel out of there?"

The question flicked a switch in Carl's head, suddenly reminded of the dire straits he'd left his personal Savior in. "Delle, she got me out - said they were goin' to kill me outright," he gestured to Negan's car with the end of his gun. "You gotta get back there, Dwight was ready to shoot her when she sent me off."

Negan's heart seized in his chest; she'd been shot before, but he'd managed to save her then. Now, he might've run out of time. "Fucking hell," he was about to turn, climb back into the car and peel out as fast as he could; but he paused, eying the boy again. "I can't have you runnin' off, you know."

Carl raised his gun again. "How're you going to stop me?"

'Well shit, he's got me there.' Negan chuckled and shrugged; it was a wonder that the son of Rick Grimes was letting him walk away at all. But it seemed they both shared a wish to not see Delle dead. "Good point," he conceded. "Turnabout is fair play though, kid. Don't think I'll go easy your people when your dad comes swingin' just 'cause my girl's got a soft spot for you."

"Right," he snarked, biting at his lip before continuing. "I... don't let her die."

Negan grew serious; he wouldn't lose her, not again. Not the both of them. "Not plannin' on it."
The two cars raced off into the night in opposite directions; as if they'd never stopped at all, but both now loaded with heaps of new information. They both had missions to attend to on different sides of the same war.

______________________________

'Well this is a fine mess I've went and got myself into.'

Delle's eyes were all cried out, drier than a desert. There wasn't much to look at in the pitch darkness of her cell, the crack of light under the door only telling her that no soul had gone by in the time she'd been there; however long that was.

It hadn't been days, she knew that much; but somewhere around the third hour she'd lost track. She'd since settled for staring up at the dark ceiling, trying to figure out how everything had wound up so unimaginably fucked.

'I should've never slept with Simon; no matter how hot he is.'

'I should never have said hello to Dwight and the girls that day.'

'I should never have suggested Tina marry Negan.'

'I should've just done it myself.'

She found herself going back and forth on that thought quite alot in her time alone; Negan, to the best of her knowledge, was well and truly dead - no getting him back this time - and she felt cheated. She'd fought against her love for so long, so self assured that it would just be more of the same; only to be proved wrong by the man Negan was with her now. It felt real - more real than it had in the before, in normal life - and it was sweeter than she could've ever wished it to be; but she'd only got a few weeks of it, tops. She wanted more; damn that man for being so addictive. If she'd said yes earlier, realized the fight was futile, that fate itself was pushing her into his arms, they would've had more. She would've traded practically anything for a few minutes more.

'I keep on fighting fate... I should've stopped so long ago.'

She rolled to her side, cradling her stomach and the baby that would die with her there, wasting away. She asked some unknown nonexistent deity for sleep.

______________________________

Dwight was nervous, to say the least.

He'd made sure that the lowest level Saviors - the ones who guarded the cells - knew not to disturb cell 9, under threat of death. He didn't specify why, only that the person inside needed a time out, and he'd deal with the release when the time came. The trouble would arise if any of the lieutenants - or worse, Simon - went down looking for an available prison and got curious about the 9th door.

Simon had bought his story pretty quickly; when they'd found Dylan's blood and body strewn around Delle's old room, both she and Carl quite missing, it hadn't taken much convincing. Simon
was enraged, but not surprised. Delle had lasted about as long as he’d expected her to in wifely captivity.

"I want our outer patrols lookin’ for them both," he'd snarled into the mass radio frequency. "Cut off her feet if she tries to fuckin’ run!"

It was vastly stressful; but so worth the shocked look of failure and confusion on her face when he locked her in. If that didn't buy him the smallest sense of satisfaction in the bloodbath that was his life, nothing ever would. He still spent the rest of the night he’d locked her up wishing he and his family had never accepted her canned peaches - he did that every night - but that look on her face offered the slightest, bittersweet reprieve from the constant flow of hatred inside his veins. He was still riding that smug, pompous high the next morning; the sky cool and grey, his breakfast of a stale cigarette was more flavorful than it had ever been. That taste, however, turned to ash in his mouth when a voice he thought was silenced for good rang out from the stair behind him.

"Surprised to see me?" Dwight's heart nearly stopped and his blood ran cold. His eyes went wide as moons when he turned - and there he stood. Negan. In all his leather and barbed baseball bat glory.

"Shouldn't be."

Dwight kicked into self preservation mode - maybe Negan didn't have the full story on all that he’d done. Maybe he could spin it. "Hell yeah, I'm surprised. We found your car, and Simon thought that-

"(--I'm sure Simon thought alot of things," Negan drawled, stepping down to ground level, his figure no less imposing. "Not gonna lie" he paced closer to his subordinate, like a wolf to its prey. "A real punch in the dick when Rick cornered me in the basement with those decomposing assholes and you fellas never showed up," he was barely a foot away from him now; Dwight was quickly reminded of how good Negan was at invading personal space. "Almost like you *wanted me gone."

"Simon thought--"

"(--What Simon thinks is for me and Simon to talk about," Negan was in no mood for his excuses. "What I want to know is what you were thinkin'." He let the question hang in the air, a smirk on his lips but utter murder in his eyes.

"I... Simon's your number two," Dwight - full of excuses. "I thought you'd want him callin' it. I-I was only followin' chain of command."

Sizing him up, Negan chewed at the inside of his lip; when did he allow such a weasel into his ranks? *Losin’ your touch, old man.* "Like a good little soldier," he muttered, that smirk completely unflappable. "Well, aren't you lucky that Daddy's come on home to put you kids back in line... and I'll be usin' your help to do it," Dwight's face was a mix of confusion and mild relief - he was assuming all the wrong things. "When the time comes."

"Y-yes sir." Negan clapped a hand approvingly on Dwight's arm before turning away - it seemed he’d be allowed to breathe a little while longer. Now he just had to figure out what to do with--

"Oh wait!" Negan's body spun back to Dwight's, the animalistic anger in his face returning in seconds. "I almost forgot. See, I got here last night, thought I'd get a little R and R, maybe get my dick wet before dealin' with you boys," and just like that Dwight's blood was running cold again. "And am I surprised to find my girl has up and vanished!"
He was panicking now; while Simon would send out the Saviors to hunt her down, Negan would comb through every last inch of the earth to find her. Starting with his own backyard. "S-she took the kid," he was more than ready to feed Negan the same story he'd given Simon - a massive underestimation. "Rick's boy - killed the guard and ran off with him last night--"

"That's real funny," again, Negan interrupted. "Because as I was enjoyin' my midnight drive back here, I ran across Carl Grimes," Dwight was practically shrinking under Negan's eye now; he wondered how he'd kill him. "And there was not hide or hair of my Delle anywhere. In fact, Carl said that you had her at your mercy when he left!" He had no chance at running, no out. "So Dwight... where the fuck is my girl?"

He hoped against hope that she'd be forgiving - but he knew her well enough to know she wouldn't be. He'd be meeting his maker faster than he'd expected. "Cell nine."

"Great," Negan swung his arm around Dwight's shoulders, constricting him to his side. "Glad you had the presence of fuckin' mind not to kill her. Let's pay her a visit, shall we?"

Dwight's clock was ticking.

The light was shockingly bright as the cell door opened, but Delle made no motion to leave. It was likely only Dwight, and she didn't plan to give him the time of day. She merely curled in on her own body, protecting her middle as best she could from the beating she suspected he'd dish out.

"What're you waiting for? Pretty sure I can't get anymore incapacitated, dickhead." She hissed in her iciest tone.

"Seems ya can't," her heart jumped into a racing beat, placing that voice instantly. "Let's fix that, sound good?"

She felt like she was moving in slow motion; even though her body whipped upwards and around to confirm her hopes. It was really him; flesh and blood, leather and love. "Negan..." she breathed, bright eyes suddenly soaked - she'd had joyful tears saved up. "You... I thought you were dead."

"Not me, sweetheart," he grinned, dropping to a knee. His hand met her cheek and she felt a rush of euphoria; how had she ever thought he'd be dead? "Never. We've got too much to do."

Her healthy arm wound around his neck, her face burrowing into the other side while his own arms wrapped her waist. She drank in his warm, unique scent while tears flowed silently; death wasn't about to keep them apart. Neither of them would allow it. "So much," she murmured, ghosting her lips across the pumping vein of his throat; there was much for both of them to see to, but certain Saviors had hell to pay first. "Dwight d--"

"He's right out here, in fact," Negan pulled away just enough to snap his bare fingers; Dwight's cowering body entered the doorway, Lucille shaking in his terrified hold. "You all had a very eventful night, now didn't you?"

She nodded slowly, absolute poison dripping from her glare. "Sure did." she growled through clenched teeth.

He could see the urge to kill in her gaze, but he still needed the greasy little man if his plans were going to go off without any hiccups. "Now now, babygirl," he coaxed her back into his arms, hands running up and down her back. "You know I love when you get that stabby slicey look in your eye,
but I'm gonna need you to cool down just a hair - at least til I'm done with him," his lips were right at her ear, stubble tickling her flesh. "Then he's all yours to play with."

It was a hefty ask - she was moments away from springing to her tired, sore feet and gouging his eyes in, digging out his brain through the sockets - but Negan was alive, and that fact was salving her anger so soothingly. "Fine," she huffed, letting her stare meet Negan's instead; a far more preferable picture. "But he stays down here. Take him out when you need to."

"Deal," he pulled her to stand, and in one fell swoop grabbed Lucille and used her end to push Dwight into the cell. A kick from his boot shut it, the man inside wearing an all too familiar look of failure and confusion. As soon as the lock was engaged, Negan's mouth was on hers; the welcome-home kiss he'd been looking for in the first place. "I missed you fierce, baby."

"Missed you too, pops," she mumbled against his mouth. He was already half supporting her body as they walked down the corridors, towards the stairs and to their rightful quarters. "Should put you on a leash, you keep runnin' off on me."

"You just say that 'cause I'm an old dog," he grinned, swatting at her backside before taking a handful; she looked awkward in that familiar black dress, but damn if he didn't like the access. "Why the hell are you dressed like that?"

She shuddered and shut her eyes; she'd have to tell Negan all of Dwight and Simon's transgressions, and her head was nearly aching already. "We'll get to that," she assured, digging her nails into his leather coated ribs. "But before that - I need you to remind me how good a fuck you are."

He beamed. *That's my girl.""Yes ma'am."

Chapter End Notes

Wow I did alot of bouncing around that chapter! Think it turned out though :)

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU! ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 111

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"I know you can't be wearin' this of your own free will," his breath caught in his throat, Delle tracing the edges and curves of his throat with kisses and licks. "But hot damn is it workin' for you in all the right ways."

She was pushing their bedroom door open - they'd barely made it up the flight of stairs, her lips never leaving him - and his large hands were already hiking up the skirt of that despicable dress, massaging the flesh of her ass. "Mm I kind of hate it," she breathed, tugging the leather jacket off his shoulders til he finally let go and slicked it off. "Maybe you should tear it off me."

He was eager to please. The black lace tore easily in his grip, the gauzy fabric coming away and falling at her feet; she looked as beautiful as ever, even with her dirtied feet and bloody hands. If anything they were a turn on. With his shirt discarded onto the floor his face buried in her chest, tonguing and tasting all the flesh he could reach. "Goddamn did I miss your tits, baby."

She groaned, his hands squeezing her breasts, teasing her nipples as she pulled him back, dragging him further into the room until her calves hit the bed frame. "How 'bout you show me what else you missed?" She purred, letting her body drop back, a panty-clad meal for his hunger.

"Oh you sassy little lady," he cooed, dropping to his knees before her; her legs were already parted on instinct, but as soon as he slicked away her underwear he had his palms pressing her legs up under her knees, toes pointing up and exposing her pussy totally open. "I missed you right here, too," his smile didn't break as his tongue darted out, tracing the ridges of her folds, lapping at what wetness their preamble had produced. "Missed how good you taste," she whimpered as he toyed at her entrance, drinking her essence from the source. "Missed makin' my sweetheart scream."

She responded in kind with carnal moans the moment his lips sealed around her clit, gripping at his hair as he sucked gently; interspersed with the ruthless flicking of his tongue simultaneously. Her skin was beginning to heat up, her chest rising and falling with heavy pants - the man's ministrations had to be one of his greatest talents. Her eyes closed as she wriggled beneath him - only for her mind's eye to take her back to Simon threatening her with death or sexual slavery. She whimpered and shook her head. 'Get that out of your head, girl.' She bucked under the scrape of his teeth, earning a chuckle vibrating against her quivering pussy. "Mm fuck..." she whispered and writhed, feeling the prod of his fingers sliding inside her channel, pressing in the same rhythm as his merciless tongue. "Oh god, N-Negan..." he had her closing her eyes again - this time she saw Dwight with his crossbow, standing over her in that cell. His words of dying alone in the dark rang like hollow, icy bells in her mind, making her heart tense despite the delicious onslaught on her nethers. 'Goddamn it, stop!' She told herself, opening her eyes to the ceiling again, concentrating on his tongue and fingers curling at her sensitive areas. "Mmff, fuck that's good--yes-" another finger joined it's twins, stuffing her full, making her arch straight off the bed and pull at his hair - and shut her eyes.

In her head she was in that cold alleyway, that new year's eve a lifetime ago. Again she was at the cruelty of other men, she couldn't run, she was hurt -- and when she opened her mouth it wasn't a moan that slipped out.

It was an outright sob.
"Baby?" Negan shot up like lightning, his hand smearing away her wetness on his mouth, crawling up to cup her cheeks. They were wet with tears; how had he not picked up on that? "Baby what's wrong?"

When she opened her eyes she too realize she'd been crying; they'd flown so freely she hadn't noticed the first few streams. "Damn it," she cursed, her voice cracking. "I'm sorry, shit--"

"Stop," he commanded, keeping her vision on him with his hands. "What's wrong, Delle? I'm right here, talk to me."

She felt helpless - and God did she hate that. She despised being the blubbering girl underneath him, needing him when she was so sure she could survive on her own. She'd never wanted to be a damsel in distress, and it was not a good fit for her. Yet still, her body was wracked in an anxious panic, worried that all of it, all of him, was merely a dream. She couldn't lose him again; even if she could go on by herself, she wasn't keen to.

"You were gone," she whispered, her fingertips studying, memorizing every inch of skin they could reach. "You were dead -- and I..." she pulled a hand away to wipe away the pesky tears. "I thought I had things handled, but when I thought you were gone - I didn't feel like me anymore..." fresh tears brimmed on her lashes.

"Shh, it's okay," he murmured, pressing his forehead to hers. "Everything's okay, baby - I wasn't gonna let that asswad Rick take me away from you. From either of you," he palmed at her belly - the baby was strong, a fighter, just like their parents. "Like I said, we've got way too damn much to do for me to go tits up in the ground now."

She breathed a little easier - more effortlessly than she had in days - but the panic wasn't completely undone yet. "I was tryin' to keep everyone safe, keep us alive til I could run," she let out a shaky breath, almost another sob. "Dwight was gonna let me die down there -- if you hadn't come along--"

"If I hadn't come along you'd have found a way out," he said, completely confident in that. When he looked at her he saw more than just his beautiful girl, mother-to-be; he saw a battle worn, blood tested warrior. She'd fought through the dead, the living, life and fate itself; his maniac, his firecracker. "Sure you were down, but I'd never count you out. You're an absolute badass, bet with a little more time you'd have busted out of there, overthrown those two shit stains - I'd have come back to you runnin' Sanctuary."

A threat of a smile plays at her mouth, but the worry won't let it blossom completely. "I just... it felt..." 'holy fuck when did I get so bad at talking!?' She chided inwardly. It was a struggle to put it into words - the terror and desperation, isolation and total hopelessness she felt when he was 'dead'.

"It's alright, sweetheart," he muttered, pressing his lips to hers; the scratch of his growing beard was welcome relief on her skin. "It's all alright. I'm right here," he planted kisses across her chin, jaw, down her neck, his hot breath fanning out across her shoulder. "Feel me? I'm right here with you, Delle." His mouth was beginning to push away the worry, replacing it with the heady want that had driven her earlier actions.

"Negan," she husked, his mouth tasting and teasing at her chest, back up her neck, over her face. "Negan, please... let me feel you."

He knew what she meant; moreover, what she needed. He could take it slow. After the ordeal his last
day and a half had been, he almost needed to. "Of course, baby," he agreed, pulling back only slightly to unbuckle his denim, shimmying out of his last few layers. He was gentle, reassuring as he pulled away long enough to take his place between their pillows, back against the headboard and legs casually outstretched. "C'mere, babygirl. In your own time."

She gulped, but the fires in the core of her soul were already blazing again. She need to feel him as deep as he could go; have him inside her to truly cement his presence. Carefully - still a little weak - she crawled up the bed, her legs parting as she straddled his lap, his cock no less insistently hard between them. She ran her fingers over the velveteen head, drawing out a rumbling growl from her partner; the sound wrapped around her like a warm embrace, a sound she thought she'd never hear again. She let her healthy arm take hold of his shoulder, using him as leverage to hoist herself up, over his leaking tip, kissing at her entrance.

"That's it baby, I'm right here, that's it..." his head dipped back as the first few inches slid inside her, hands lazily placed at her sides to guide her; but not force her. He didn't mind her taking control for the evening, she needed it. She needed to feel a little power again. "Fuck sweetheart, you feel amazing."

She groaned and dipped her head to his shoulder when he filled her completely, buried to the hilt. It had her shuddering and shaking, an impossibly complete feeling bathing her from head to toe. That feeling so unique it could only be named Negan. "Mm... God I missed you like this... so deep in me."

"You n' me both," he breathed a laugh, holding her steady as her hips rolled in fluid waves, their equal warmth combining into a fire. His own rocked in unison, just enough to press at his favorite spots, the spots that had her moaning. "You feel me, baby? Right here," his hand spread against her lower belly, the slightest sensation of their sex palpable from the outside. The press of his hand made for a tighter fit; and neither of them were complaining about it. "This is right where I always want to be, balls deep in this perfect fuckin' pussy. Ugh fuck, made to damn measure."

His crude words were reassuring, just as much as the throb inside her was. His depth, his heat, the mere proximity; it was making the past day, all her past indignities when he wasn't at her side melt away. Just her, just him. "Mmahh... why do you have to feel this good?" She wondered breathlessly, running her hands across his ink and chest hair. Every new thrust was stoking the fire in her now, getting her closer to her peak; she wanted to fall over it with him. "It's like a fucking drug; have me hooked and everything..."

"Well don't you worry, baby; I'll keep you on that high as long as you fuckin' need," he smirked, but he was nearing his own climax too. Already pregnant though she was, he'd never get tired of unloading his seed inside her ever tightening walls. "I'm right here baby, let go; I'll put ya back together-- Ahh..." he grunted and brought a hand through her hair, bringing their foreheads together again while her pussy clenched around him, her release falling over her slow.

It was a rising wave, nothing hurried or crashing about it, yet somehow lasting longer than she'd guessed it would, every inch of her body tingling with celebrating nerves, a welcome crescendo as he too lost himself, pumping his come as deep as his cock would reach. His name left her lips in a sigh, eyes finally shutting in safety; all she could see where bursts of light and stars.

"Mm... I needed that." She admitted, wrapping one arm around his neck while the other snaked under his arm, stroking his shoulder blades.

"Not as much as I did," he laughed, his chest warm and booming against hers. Both arms held her
waist; despite his sex softening, he was in no hurry to pull out of her heat. "I swear, my dick is steel and you've got a goddamn magnet lodged up there somewhere."

She grinned - god that was what he wanted to see, more than anything - and she kissed his lips. "Good; I'll keep you nice and close then," a seriousness colored her features, her bright eyes searching his deep dark orbs. As good as he had her feeling, it didn't change the fact that both of them now knew the pain of believing the other was dead; and if there was one lesson they'd taken from that, it was that neither reacted well without the other. "You... you're not allowed to die on me. You got that?"

He blinked, a little taken aback, but his expression quickly softened. "Deal, sweetheart," he smiled. "You either. You go gettin' mauled by anymore jungle cats and there'll be hell to pay."

She snickered and nodded; she could've spent the rest of her lifetime coiled up in that bed, resting safely in his grip. But there was far too much business to attend to, and skulls to crack. "Shall we go unseat the usurpers? Show them why you don't fuck around with us?"

He tightened his arms around her, kissing her jaw. "In a minute, baby," he purred. "I've got a little plan in mind, really show those dickbags who turned the unholy shit storm they've whipped up for themselves."

"Oh, now you're talking."

When Carl stepped out of that car at Hilltop's gates, it was like the second coming. The son of Rick, back from the presumed dead.

It was both heartening and dismaying to see members from every community converging at the settlement; half to see so many people brought together and helping each other. Half because their numbers had dwindled so dramatically. So many were injured; and for every new face he saw there were at least three he didn't see in the crowd.

"Carl!" It was Tara who found him first, throwing her arms around him in a tight hug; though she winced when he hugged her back, a wound in her side. Everyone was hurting on either faction. "I-I can't believe you're here! You made it!"

Daryl wasn't far behind her, patting his shoulder in his detached way. "Ain't nothin's gonna keep this kid down," he stated it like a fact. "Did Dwight let ya loose?"

His eye grew cold at the mention of his name. "Dwight was ready to kill me," both Daryl and Tara seemed shocked; but not very much. Neither trusted the turncoat Savior. As he moved to enter the house he spotted Maggie and Jesus heading his way. "Have you seen my dad? I need to talk to him."

"Carl," Maggie embraced him quickly, but her sea glass eyes were on him just as fast, hard and determined. "Knew you'd make it out okay; their numbers finally drop enough for you to slip out?"

"N-no; where's my dad? I have to talk to him," Maggie nodded towards the house from which Hilltop got its name; he and all the other leaders of the communities had holed up there for safety and private meetings. After the unexpected outbreak of the dead - as caused by the Saviors' tainted
ballistics - it became the only realistic option. "Actually, you should come too. You should all hear this."

Carl Grimes was in for the talk of his life; he had to convince them the war wasn't worth fighting any longer, to spare the Saviors...and to not kill Negan, who'd killed so many of theirs.

He had his work cut out for him.

Chapter End Notes

Adding a new perspective, just to allow a little view from the other side ;)

What did ya'll think?

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU! ♥️♥️♥️
Chapter 112

Chapter Notes

Holy long ass chapter!

Finally exercising one of my earliest wishes for this fic...

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Delle was ready and raring to execute their plan - but wasn't exactly thrilled to be wearing yet another dress. The spaghetti straps itched at her shoulders and the cotton was an irritation on the skin beneath. She missed her own clothes.

"C'mon, it'll be that much more satisfying," Negan murmured in her ear, straightening her skirt. "Then I'll rip it to shreds for you again. It's gonna be great."

He was at her side outside the usual meeting chambers; but only he would be going in, at first. Those he still trusted had rounded up Simon, and he was waiting for his punishment within. While his actions with the Saviors might've proved excusable, what he had done with Delle was not. You cage a wolf, you should expect to be bit when it gets free.

"Try to wrap it up quickly," she whispered, pecking his lips. "I want to join in as soon as I can."

"I'll see what I can do, babe," he nodded to the edge of the doorway, where she wouldn't be seen. "You remember your cue?" She nodded in return and he smiled. "Showtime, then!"

Simon knew he was in for it the moment he'd been pulled inside. He didn't need to see Negan to know that he was back; he felt that dread beginning to knot in his belly. He'd screwed up terribly with the attack on Hilltop, but it was fixable. Delle running off with the son of the enemy? That might lose him his head. When Negan waltzed in with all his usual pomp and confidence, a grim glare never left Simon. Arat, Gary, Norris and Eugene still had a fighting chance; but he felt there was a better likelihood he'd never be leaving that room again.

"Simon," he greeted him like a fox would greet a chicken. Taking his seat at the head of the table, he drew his hand out to give him the go ahead. Before him laid a cloth and the usual bottle of linseed oil to keep Lucille supple. He planned to multitask. "Don't let me stop you, pal. Explain yourself."

He couldn't find his words at first - shocked his skull hadn't been opened the moment Negan had walked in. Maybe he had a shot. "I thought they killed you and that you were gone, like-" he snapped his fingers for emphasis. "-Like that. I lacked discipline, and I made it personal," Negan's head dipped back; it allowed him to quite literally look down his nose at the man while massaging the slippery coating into every unbarbed inch of his bat. "And that's why I moved things from infection to extermination at the Hilltop. Yes things went bad... Though I think it's possible we may have found ourselves in a similar tactical situation, regardless of approach, we don't know that. So I'll own it. I just ask that you give me a pass on this one," it struck Negan that Simon was only asking for forgiveness on the incident at Hilltop. He must've thought he had no idea about what he'd done to his girl, the threats he'd made. 'Dumbass.' "I'll make it up to you. I promise you that."
Negan let that promise hang over the table for a few moments, Lucille shining and fresh on his shoulder. He was going to drag it out; because that's what Simon had earned for himself. Convincing everyone he was dead, leading Saviors to massacre, trying to take his girl - he deserved everything he was going to get.

"Y'know, when I first got this place up and running - when you helped me get it on its legs - I wasn't so sure about keepin' you in the fold," he began, starting a lazy pace to Simon, still seated at the other end. "I mean, what you did, killing all those men, those boys in that Oceanside settlement so long ago, a lot of people would think that is some psychotic shit. Like that is the work of a demented, broken, goddamn ghoul," he could see Simon's jaw tensing under his skin; he relished that look. "Like that's not someone that you want to work with, let alone stand next to. So I figured I'd keep my eye on you. And I did," he was at his side now, Simon making no move to look up at him - but he knew he'd see murder in his eyes if he did. "Even let you run around with my girl, keep her entertained for awhile. And everything seemed to work out right up until this point."

The room was silent enough to hear the beat of each living heart; Simon's utterly stampeding in his chest. This was it; he could practically feel his internal clock counting down the seconds til his life was ended.

"I'm gonna need you on your knees," Negan growled in a voice colder than ice. Simon moved obediently from his chair, dropping to his knees - but still he refused to face him. It was a bold move, no denying that. Simon was a bold guy. "You gonna make a move, or is that it?"

"No move to make." Simon's voice was hollow but somehow still drowned in rage, waiting to die while wishing Negan would just drop dead.

"No," Negan let Lucille brush against Simon's ear, the impending threat all too real. "There isn't," Simon shut his eyes, cursing the day he'd ever shook hands with that leather jacket wearing beast; or even looked at his pet she-wolf. 'May their ends be twice as terrible.' He hoped and waited for the blow... that didn't come. "All is forgiven!" Negan smiled, and the air returned to Simon's lungs. "Get your ass up; we're good."

As he walked away Simon was well and truly shocked; it took him a moment to find his feet. Was fealty and surrender really all Negan needed from him to be sated? Didn't he realize he'd hate him no less? Of course, he didn't voice any of that. Instead he straightened, adjusting his belt and nodding gratefully. "I won't let you down. Not you." He tried to sound truthful; as honest as that would've been before Delle had popped into their lives.

"I appreciate the hell out of that!" He gave Arat a tap on the shoulder, who obediently produced a map, marked with spots surrounding the land that was Hilltop. "This is where we start. The first of our new staging posts. See, we do not have to take the Hilltop. We just have to make sure that the farmers can't leave," it was a solid plan; if executed right. "We stay nimble. We stay light. We send their asses to their maker every time one of them tries to poke their head out. Sometimes right in front, sometimes from a mile away, but *every goddamn time," he glanced up from the map, ensuring everyone was paying close attention; they were. "Tomorrow afternoon, I am going to take a 10-head team to this spot. I am stocking it with supplies and ammo that Dr. Smartypants is workin' on," he winked to Eugene, still looking as out of place and strange as he ever did. "Everyone else here is gonna do the same thing, same time, different spot. End of day tomorrow, we will have cache after cache around that Hilltop and always be spitting distance from a reload," again, it would take work. Their numbers were lowered, but it could still be pulled off. "There will be teams 24/7 around that place snipin' them, one by one, day after day, until we have full attrition."
It was ballsy - bordering on foolhardy - but Negan's plans usually were. "It's an ambitious plan with testicular heft, I'll give you that," Simon forced a smile to his mouth, teeth grinding into proverbial dust. "Very happy to have you back, boss man."

"Damn good to be back," Negan grinned; but he wasn't finished with Simon's punishment yet, not by a long shot. "Everybody clear out, get our teams in shape. We have to be ready," everyone was turning towards the door; but the mustache had to stay. "Except you, Simon. We've still got a few things to talk about."

Simon sat while the others filed out, each one freshly shocked by the sight of Delle outside the door. She placed a finger to puckered lips in an effort to hush them; which they did. Simon's back was still to the door when she slipped inside the room, now empty but for her past and current lovers.

"Now Simon, I couldn't help but notice that my empire is devoid of a certain black haired, bright eyed little psycho chick," Simon knew that had to be coming; but he prickled and clenched his fists nonetheless. "You want to tell me where the hell she is?"

It was more of an order than a question, one Simon would have to comply to. "I... when I got back and informed her of your apparent demise, she was distraught. I tried to calm her down, but she spun out," spinning the lie was easy when he was unaware Negan knew the truth. "You know how she can be... when Dwight told me she went runnin' off with the Grimes kid, I sent out scouts to try n' track her down, but," he threw his hands up and leaned an elbow onto the table. "If she's out there, she'd be at Hilltop by now. And who knows what those animals are doin' to her."

Delle's raised her brows to Negan, screwing up her face in a gobsmacked disbelief. 'Can you believe this guy?' She gestured towards him but remained silent.

"That's quite the ordeal my little lady must've been through," Negan marvelled, lying Lucille across the table's surface. "Wonder what she thinks about all that."

"Sounds a little fantastical to me," Simon almost jumped out of his seat when her voice rang out behind him - his eyes were wide and shocked as she strolled into his view, boots replacing those ridiculous heels, but swishing in a new black dress like she'd been poured into it. Born into it. "Sounds like a lying, skeezy snake tryin' to cover his own ass, spinning bullshit into fucking gold. I mean really," she stopped at Negan's side, his arm around her hips. "Oscar worthy performance, Si."

"D-Delle," Simon stammered, his jaw slack. "Dwight-- Dwight said you ran off."

"Dwight was wildly misinformed," she smiled and tilted her head, hair cascading past her shoulder. She really was a picture, stunning in black - Negan did love her all done up in the finery he felt she deserved; but he just needed this look to prove a point. "Maybe you shouldn't have put the stock in him that you did."

Simon's young empire was crumbling down around him, and he could do nothing but gawk. "I..."

"So my girl here," he squeezed an ass cheek out of his view, making her twitch. "She's got a very different version of events. Why don't you recount things for him?"

"Well to the best of my memory," she put on a naive ingenuine act, batting her lashes. "Simon came trotting into our bedroom, and was quick to tell me he saw you very dead, and put you down himself," she ran a hand over his slicked hair, glad no such thing had come to pass. "and then, he started threatening me with torture and mutilation if I didn't spread my legs for him."
Negan had heard all of it already - but he still gasped dramatically and furrowed his brows at Simon. "Si! Coercin' my beautiful girl into sex? You know we don't do that here," he clicked his tongue in disapproval. "That is some disgusting, slime ball shit to do."

"Isn't it?" She cupped her own cheek, pretending to be overwhelmed. "Then he dressed me up in one of these wife get ups, like I was some fucked up doll."

"Oh now that won't do," he scolded, standing from his chair and losing his single leather glove. This was the bigger portion of the punishment; something Delle had thought of herself. His twisted little maniac had some sick ideas. "This little lady should never wear these; they're not her," he hooked his fingers under the delicate straps of the frock, sliding them down her shoulders, running his thumb over her tiger scars as he did. "At least, unless you ask her real nice..." The loose fit onyx cotton dropped from her figure without much more prompting, leaving her bare but for boots. Simon's instinct was to look away, but that wasn't part of the plan.

"Oh no, Simon, you keep your eyes glued to this fine little piece, you got that?" Negan snarled; at a glacial pace Simon turned his head back, hate filled fire burning his skin from the inside out. "I mean look at this vision; you had her dressed up in those stupid dresses when you could've had her just like this?" His knuckles ran from her ribs to her hip, her skin blushing. "That is just a bad call on your part, man."

She shivered at the cool touch of his leather at her back, glancing up to him. "He touched me, too."

"Oh did he?" Negan raised a brow, plucking the bottle of linseed oil from the table. "Where did this colossal jackass think he could put his hands?"

She couldn't help her skin getting hotter; she hadn't been so drunk on power since that double beheading Negan had granted her. This was a new kind of power, and it was igniting a heat in her belly. "He played with my tits." She gasped at the sensation of Negan's slick palms cupping each mound of flesh, massaging in the oil coating his fingers, toying at her nipples and leaving them with an oily shine.

"How dare he," Negan husked, kissing the bow of her neck and shoulder, making certain Simon still watched. "Where else?"

She was gasping - just barely - but the plan had to come to fruition, no matter how turned on she was. "He grabbed my pussy." She let a euphoric groan leave her body as his fingers dipped down, two drawing her lower lips open while the others rounded her clit; the slippery liquid on his digits combined with her own juices created a gliding mixture that let him tease and pressure just right.

"Oh Simon, bet she wasn't moanin' like this when you touched her, now was she?" He smirked, his fingers quickening their onslaught and making her whimper. "Answer me, Si."

Simon's expression was blacker than night, more raging than hate; he'd kill them both, he knew that now. He just had to endure this first. If he even could. "N-no," he grunted through tightly clenched teeth. "She didn't, boss."

"Somethin' else," she panted, curving her healthy arm back and around Negan's neck to hold herself up. This would be the tour de force of their little show. "He-he said he was gonna fuck me... fuck me bare."
"Well," Negan didn't really care about staining his denim with the oil as he unzipped his fly; there would be other pants. He pressed his hand between her shoulder blades, bending her over the narrow edge of the table till her front pressed the cold surface. "Got to fix that now don't we?"

She kept a steady eye contact with Simon as Negan's oily fingers pressed in, slicking her walls a bit more before he slid his length in instead, fully seated inside her. Her face contorted but she never broke her stare, Simon glowering like an oncoming storm; it was a look that should've scared her, but under Negan it only heightened her sensitivity. Maybe being watched wasn't so terrible.

"Mm goddamn does she feel good," Negan purred, pulling back hardly an inch before snapping forward, hands dragging her hips back as he did. "But I don't have to tell you that, do I? Betcha remember how tight this little pussy is, how fuckin' soaked she gets," he growled, running a hand up her spine. "Not that you could ever get her there... this sweet cunt drips for me, and only me."

"He wasn't all that bad, Negan," she earned a smack on her ass for that, but it was nothing they hadn't planned. She groaned as his thrusts grew harsher, fingernails digging into the table top. "You wanted this bad, didn't you bean pole? Fuck me raw, fill me up with come? You were goin' on about that..." he knew if he looked away there was a good chance he'd have his eyes plucked out - though given the scene it didn't seem like a bad option.

"Heh, as usual I beat ya to it," Negan tugged at her hair, enough to draw her up against his chest, never ceasing his hips. "Betcha thought you could make her forget how good it is with me, huh? Turn her into a little wife-and-mother soccer mom or some shit? Too little, too late again, Si." He grinned and ran his hand over her belly; he didn't have to say more before Simon's understanding passed over his face, knowing what he'd meant.

"F-fuck, Negan..." she arched against his back, the angle hitting fresh spots inside and making her toes curl.

"That close already, baby? Guess that's what you get with a man who knows what he's doing," Negan's teeth were practically bared in a snarl, his eyes now on Simon as Delle's were rolling back. "I want you to burn this into that walnut-sized brain of yours, Si; she's never gonna be yours again. You're never gonna do this to her - not that you ever did - and she's never. Gonna. Love. You." He threw his hips up with all his strength in every word, the last efforts she needed to come for him, her body dropping forward in exhausted ecstasy and her arm just grazing Simon's elbow; he pulled away like she was an acid burn.

The room pulsed with sexual energy and furious tension; Delle was still gasping, trying to catch her breath after such an intense and unique orgasm. 'Damn, I'm kinkier than I thought.' When she opened her eyes, she made direct contact with Simon again; ready to threaten him herself. "You never touch me again," she panted. "Or you'll lose those hands."

Nobody believed Carl at first, when he explained the parameters of his escape; they just didn't buy that the psychotic she-wolf at Negan's side could've turned him loose - even offered her own life in his place. But the truth was the truth, whether they believed it or not. His father and Michonne, though overjoyed to see him alive, were the most skeptical of the group.

"That girl didn't fold on Negan the whole time we had her," Michonne pointed out. "She's as loyal as a dog. She had nothing to gain by setting you free."
"At the time she thought Negan was dead--"

"In a perfect world." Rick's voice was cold, bouncing off glass as he stared out the window to the masses below.

Carl shot him a look he didn't see. "--she thought he was gone, and Simon was planning on killing me... she figured I was worth saving."

"Why?" Daryl rasped, arms crossed tight. "Not that I'm not glad t'see ya but why did she think you were worth it?"

Carl took a breath; now or never. "I think... I think she thought I still had a chance of getting you all to spare Negan's life."

The whole room's energy changed on a dime; anger, frustration, shock and some level of absurd amusement filled the air.

"You're not fuckin' serious," Daryl growled, straightening out. "This don't end until he's gone for good, along with any other assholes dumb enough to stand with him. That includes her."

The Grimes family all felt a little pang at that, for various reasons - they were the only ones who knew about the pregnancy.

"We gave them the opportunity to get out of the line of fire when all this started," Rick declared, refusing to face the others. "But Negan's life is non-negotiable. I'm gonna kill him, plain and simple."

Carl despaired; he couldn't have survived Sanctuary twice only to have his efforts and ideas silenced so quickly. "There's alternatives here - lessons can still be learned without killing him--"

"Tell that to Abraham, Sasha, Denise--" Tara sneered.

"Tell that to Glenn." Maggie's statement was steeped in a terrible sorrow; she had truly lost everyone. She only had vengeance, and the promise of a baby, already beginning to show - but didn't Delle have much of the same?

"--I'm not saying let him off with a slap on the wrist," Carl's eye fell, mustering his nerve. "Or to let things slide back to the way they were. I just... what's the point of all of it now? We've lost so many, on either side - it's all just vengeance and hatred and killing each other, when is that ever going to be enough?"

"It'll be enough when they're all dead and gone." Daryl was adamant in his beliefs there.

"Carl isn't wrong," Jesus - living up to his name - wanted peace as much as the young man. "If we just keep on killing each other, none of this will stop until we're all just wandering corpses. There has to be some forgiveness, some redemption here."

Maggie started at him, one of her greatest confidantes, dumbstruck. "You can't actually believe Negan can be reformed? He hasn't deserved a second of breathin' since the moment he killed our people."

"Reformed, no," Jesus shook his head. "But at this point, I don't think he needs to be killed for the
world to see his way is broken and decaying. That is crystal clear now. He can still be made an example of without putting his head on a pike."

Rick scoffed a humorless laugh and caught everyone's attention. "So now that enough of his army and ours have died, his debt is paid up?" He shook his head. "Bastard even has folks dyin' in his place now. Too damn bad, though; doesn't matter how much of their blood we spill, unless it's his it won't fix things."

"And how much of our people's blood needs to spill in order to do that?" Carl spat back; the man at the window looked like his father, but it didn't feel like him. Like Ahab, he had to have his white whale; even if he had to sink his ship to do it. "Who has to die for you to kill Negan? Me? Michonne? Judith?"

Rick turned abruptly, his eyes glassy and barely there. Like his soul had left him ages ago. "I won't let that happen," he snarled, heading for the door. "But Negan dies. End of fucking story."

'No, that won't be it,' Carl stomped after his father, pursuing him through the house. 'We need to get to the other side of this.' Their fight was nowhere near over.

Chapter End Notes

Well there's part one of the punishment ;) and Carl's efforts. Taking a trip down memory lane tomorrow folks, stay tuned!!

Like my stuff? Leave me a comment! Love your thoughts love your opinions love YOU! ♡♡♡♡

(BTW, linseed oil is totally body safe. Googled it.)
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 113

Before...

Virginia spring was in full swing; the air was getting humid, hanging low like a warm fog throughout the town. It promised an even hotter summer around the corner; but at least the nights were still cool and pleasant. It made the bar a little easier, a little more welcoming every evening, when Delle could take short reprieves in the chill of darkness between her usual beer slinging and maintenance.

Lately, she'd been at the bar even more than Barnes; opening and closing almost every night, keeping the place clean and stocked, even handling deliveries. Barnes was indeed getting on in years, and Delle's willingness to step up was like a sampler of the retirement he was seriously considering; but he didn't want her worrying about that just yet. He was happy to give her work while he could; god knew she needed it.

She was having to pull twice as hard to get ends to meet; the firing from Salder's had been a hefty financial blow, and her father's death was a drain as well. There were still papers to sign, a landlord to argue with - who had every right to raise the rent now that the named tenant had died, but by that much!? - and a future to plan for; a future she still couldn't picture quite right. Fang still didn't trust her with Negan, didn't trust Negan at all; but she loved him fiercely still. She knew still it wasn't right - but god it felt so right. Time with Negan felt different, like even with their baggage and mess and conflict and years, it was where she was supposed to be. Their fires burned at the same heat, the same intensity; and it felt oh so welcoming to have acceptance, totally, unconditionally, for who she was.

But then why couldn't she just commit?

He didn't say it, didn't ask, but he didn't really need to. She knew he wanted her in every sense, wanted the world to see them for who they were; society be damned, he wanted her at his side til he dropped dead. And maybe that was starting to look a little more appealing, a little sweeter to her eye; but Fang would never go for it. He had a hard enough time with their covert, secret flame; bringing it into the light of day could very well make permanent the rift he'd previewed for her at Christmas. He wanted his sister to have her happiness, but he remained adamant that it wasn't real, genuine with Negan. He was still certain that on some level he was just using her, that she was a brief little mid-life-crisis fling that he'd drop when he came to his senses and went back to his wife; and he was certain Delle would love him still, even then. There was no convincing him otherwise, and Delle wasn't budging without her brother. Not when all they had left was each other.

It was getting late; almost one in the morning and Delle hadn't seen another soul since the last patron left at 11:00. She hadn't expected much business that night - very few people came drinking on a Tuesday - so she spent her time cleaning, organizing the stock room, and worrying herself silly over what to do next.

'Maybe we should move... I could probably find better work in a bigger city, keep our heads above
water.

'Fang loves the school, though; I shouldn't transplant him out of nowhere like that.'

'And what about Negan? Does he even want to stay here? Would I... would I leave if he asked me to go?'

'I wouldn't leave Fang... would Negan make me choose?'

She sighed and returned to stacking boxes of coasters in the back room; Barnes hadn't tidied or redone inventory in years. It was enough to keep her mostly distracted - that and the thought of calling Negan at the end of her shift and having him in his truck. It was still one of her favorite places to get it on, tight, enclosed and impossibly hot... but as she heard the door to the bar swing loose, she pushed her fantasizing to the back of her mind. A little decorum never hurt on the job; but when she stepped out to the public space, her whole body went cold as the dead, her heart missing a beat.

Dressed in creams and beiges, there stood Lucille.

'Oh fuck my fucking stupid screwed up life.'

"Hello, Delle," her voice was cool, but strained; there was a desperation in her that Delle only knew half the source of. "I think we're due for a talk."

Quite suddenly, Delle felt her age.

It was harshly apparent, the naive little 19 year old girl, confronted by the real, adult woman who was there to get her due. She would have to answer for all the lying, running around, the total lack of responsibility; this was a punishment.

"Sure." She breathed, setting foot on the main floor of the room. She didn't offer a seat, or a drink; she had a strong feeling that Lucille wouldn't accept either.

"I know," the former wife began, her arms crossed tight over her off-white coat. "I know it's been you... who's been sleeping with my husband."

Delle swallowed nothing from her dry mouth, heart racing in her ribcage. "I-I didn't know," she mumbled, scared to find eye contact with her. "I didn't know it was you-- he never--"

"It shouldn't matter if it was me or not, Delle," she hissed. "It matters that he was married - still married - at all. You shouldn't have even looked his way, knowing that."

"I didn't learn that til things..." 'til I was already falling in love.' She couldn't rightly say that, though. "He didn't wear his ring. There were... there were no signs. When he... when he kissed me, I thought we were both single."

It turned Lucille's stomach to think of Negan even touching her, kissing her... it was disgusting, wrong. He needed to be put back on the right path. "That doesn't excuse what you did after that; you should've broke things off."

"I tried to, I just..." How could she tell Lucille the truth? That her husband had convinced her to stay, how he'd gone on about needing her, never feeling anything so strongly as what he felt with her... had he fed his wife those same lines when they'd been dating?
Lucille bit her lip; she wanted to smack her, make her feel as terrible as she did, but it would only hurt her true reason for being there. She had to be softer if she was going to get what she wanted. "I... I know how you must've felt. That's how Negan is, how he's always been. He's charming, he's," she let her eyes flicker up and down the picture of misguided youth standing there. "Older. And I think everyone has a crush on their teacher at some point... I know it takes two to tango. He's got his own shortcomings and sins to answer for, I just..." somehow she forced a stare, her warm brown eyes meeting Delle's, all full of fear. "I... I don't think he's going to stop this... so you have to."

Her meaning didn't click immediately; she couldn't really be asking... "What're you saying?" Delle's eyes narrowed in on her rival.

"It's time this ends," she didn't want to betray her truth, her illness, but she would if she was pressed to. "For the good of both of you. I mean... what did you really think was going to happen?" Lucille offered a sympathetic smile. "You're just a child yet, Delle; he's a middle aged man. Do you really think you want the same things as he does?"

*What I want is Negan!* But it was a legitimate question, and Delle didn't know the answer. She'd never had much of anything, to herself even less; she could be content on him. But could he? He was used to a certain standard of life, to having a wife; he'd been trying for kids for who knew how long. Could she really offer that?

"I know I didn't want what I do now when I was your age," Lucille continued; she was beginning to see her seeds of doubt taking root and sprouting in the young woman. Love was powerful, but so was the unknown. "Can you really say you'll still be interested five, six years from now?"

Right then and there, she could've confidently said yes; but would he say the same? There was no chance of a white picket fence in their future, that was a given, but was there a future at all? The questions were whirling around Delle's head like a hurricane, and all she could really do was hold onto her mantra in the eye of the storm: *'Negan loves me.*"

"I... I can't say that for sure, no," Delle's tongue found her speech, syllable by syllable, deliberately. "Nobody can. But... I love him right now," she could see tears welling in Lucille's eyes, but she'd been the one asking these questions; she should've known the answers would hurt. "He loves me right now. And has f-for awhile. I don't know if it's going to be forever or anything like that, but I want to try," she felt a little of her fire returning to the seat of her soul. "I want the chance to try. Maybe we'll want different things - we're damn good at butting heads - but I want to fight with him. I want to love him, as long as I can," she let her hands curl into fists at her sides. "I am... I am always going to be sorry for what I did to you, what he did; but I'm not going to walk away from him like that. I... I think it's time you left, Lucille," she went to turn back to the store room, to call Negan with very different news. "And sign the papers."

"Delle," Lucille's voice cracked, the hopelessness breaking through her faux confidence and experience. "Please... I... I need him."

She gripped the doorway of the back room so tightly she might've cracked the wood. "Who's to say I don't?" She spat back; if Lucille wanted a fight she'd get one. "I'm sorry for what we did, but we're together now--"

"I'm sick."

Delle had heard such a thing before; on medical dramas, romantic schmaltzy movies, and from her
own mother shortly before her death. She didn't take the claim lightly. "What do you mean you're sick?"

Lucille wiped at her eyes with her coat sleeve, tarnishing the wool. "It's cancer," she whimpered. "Pancreatic. I don't have long, if time at all. They're doing what they can b-but... its very aggressive." It was heart wrenching twice over, to describe how her own body was killing her at that very moment.

Delle looked back at her; she seemed genuine. By her limited interactions with the woman, she didn't seem the type to lie, particularly about something so serious; it made their situation that much more awful, her actions feeling that much more despicable. "I am so sorry," she whispered, glancing to the floor. "Is... can the doctors do anything?"

"They want to send me to an institute, in Indianapolis," but she wouldn't go alone. "I can't do this without him, Delle; I can't get better on my own, and I won't die alone. I'm... begging you here," her cheeks were streaked with mascara stained tears now, body quaking in fear. What did a dying woman have to worry about in keeping up appearances? "Please, give me my husband back."

What could she say? 'Fuck you, he's mine now, enjoy the cancer!' Her demons jeered; but she wasn't about to go and cut her so deeply. Why did this come down to her? "Why not go to Negan with this?" She prompted. "I know he's been trying to reach you..."

"I know he'd feel terrible," she murmured, damning her heart once again for loving him still. "But... I-don't think he would leave on his own. I know him better than he knows himself, and I know that when he looks at you he sees someone who needs saving," Delle's skin crawled at that. "And he'll always feed his hero complex."

'I never needed saving; I'm just fine on my own!' Delle told herself; though of late she had been relying on him more. Calling him after her father's death, him comforting her, trying to help with legal papers and unnotarized wills; what was a normal give and take in a regular relationship felt like a weakness for Delle. But she couldn't have known any better; she was still so young.

"So it's on me," she pieced Lucille's plan together, until it was one terrible picture. "You... you need me to end this. End it so he won't go sniffing around again."

"I know it hurts," Lucille couldn't be apologetic about that; the both of them deserved some pain for what they'd done. "I can't do this without him. If... if when I'm gone, he comes looking for you, then that's for you to decide on," she met eyes with the younger woman again. "But he promised me. In sickness and in health, and I need him now, more than anything, for the sick part. Please. Let him go."

Delle couldn't conjure speech; Lucille was all but asking for the heart out of her chest, but to drive Negan off as well? When mere moments before she'd been considering skipping town with him, that conversation had it slipping away, like old snow melting in Virginian sun; a wistful puddle from a different time. The gap between them suddenly felt astronomical, and she felt all too palpably the differences between her and Lucille. Delle was like ice cold liquor and leather jackets; pavement and storm clouds. Lucille was the opposite; she was honey and cream, warmth and spring days.

Delle was the definition of a phase.

Lucille was built to last, a classic; even in her crumbling body.
And for the first time since he'd packed up and left his wife, Delle was doubting Negan.

"I... you ought to go, Lucille," Delle spoke barely above a whisper, feet planted firmly to the ground. "We're closing soon."

Lucille looked at her with a blank expression; the seeds of doubt were blooming, alright, but she wasn't certain they'd come to fruition. Delle loved Negan with the single-mindedness and stubbornness of any headstrong teenager; but that wasn't real. That wasn't husband-and-wife material. That wasn't til-death-do-us-part; not to her, not ever.

Delle would heal. Lucille wouldn't.

"Please Delle," she pleaded once more before heading out into the cool night. "Please, do this one good thing in this ugly, twisted year. Let me have my husband back."

The bar had never been so silent as Delle engaged the lock behind her; there was nothing but the hum of her heart beating in her ears. It had already begun to break.

Chapter End Notes

Getting the feeling that I've lost alot of readership, particularly on that last one.

I'm sorry if it feels like I'm dragging this out; I'm trying not to. The story just gets away from me.

Might start spacing my postings out a little, we'll see. Getting burnt pretty bad. More 'present' stuff next. Might end up taking one of my off ramps to end all this. Might not be the ending I have planned.

Comment if you like.
"Dad, please!" Carl followed him through to the bedroom he'd taken with Michonne and Judith, playing deaf to his son's please. "Would you just listen to me!?"

"I am listenin'," Rick replied, finally facing his boy. Somehow, something in him didn't quite recognize him. Maybe it was his old self, the one that had raised his son, that now seemed like a stranger. "You're askin' me to bend over and take his shit, and that can't happen, not ever again! He's a monster that needs ending."

"This can stop, Dad," Carl pleaded, wringing his hands. "You can put an end to all of this; but noone else needs to lose their life--"

"--this is about that damn girl and her kid, isn't it?" Rick was truly trying to see why his son was so serious about advocacy for Negan, but he just couldn't. All he saw was red. "She convince ya that suddenly Negan can be Father of the Year? I don't care how many kids he's got poppin' up--"

"Do you even hear yourself right now!?" Carl was shouting outright; a little of Delle's fire had rubbed off on him. "What about all the times you almost died!? Or me!? Did you not care then!?"

Rick scowled deep under his beard; he loved his family, but family had no place in all out war. "You know that's not what I meant," he tried to sound calmer. "But I'm not gonna give Negan a free pass just 'cause his girl is expectin'--"

"Then do it for yourself!" Carl cut him off; and it was true. Rick had been living in the heart of vengeance for too long. He barely even looked like himself anymore, sounded like himself even less. "You've been fighting for so long, all you want is death now; there are different paths, healthier ones!"

"And what is it you want out of all this, Carl?" Rick demanded, his frame squared as if ready to fight. "What good comes out of a living, breathing Negan?"

Carl took a moment, feeling the utmost sympathy and tragedy for his wartorn father."I want to make you feel safe, Dad, if only for five minutes; but I don't think that can happen without you making peace with Negan," Carl had learned - far too young - that vengeance lead to nothing good. Rick was trying to stop up a wound that had been stewing since the night at the RV; this war only kept it open and bleeding. "We don't have to forget what happened, Negan still needs punishment, but you can make it so that it won't happen again, that nobody has to live this way, show everyone that every life is worth something," he hoped and prayed he was getting through to his father on some level. "Start everything over. Show everyone that they can be safe again without killing, that it can feel safe again, without the bats and the wars and the hatchets. Give the world a chance to rebuild from the right base. We can't build our society on blood."

The room ticked with tension as Rick measured and weighed his son's words. He was the future, his boy; but it was his job to get him there. Carl, his sister, they did deserve a world worth living in; but how could it be worthy if Negan's heart was still beating?
"...if Negan lays down his arms," Rick spoke slowly as Carl's heart rose, a little awestruck. "If he surrenders, comes willingly... I'll consider keepin' him alive."

It was better than anything Carl could've hoped for, finally feeling some lightness as he hugged his father, proud of his progression, his strength in letting go of grudges.

How was he supposed to know it was an all out lie?

_________________________________

Maybe it had been a bit much; but the lesson had been taken to heart.

It just didn't have the desired result.

Simon was near tearing his room apart over what he'd been through, what was now permanently etched onto his brain. Her skin, bare and slick in his grimy paws, that self important smirk that ruined her pretty features. It was so ugly and it was never going away.

And a freaking baby!?

Negan had tried in his not so subtle way to be coy, but it was obvious now; Delle was expecting his child. That infuriated Simon all the more, darkness seething inside him. Negan - who'd must've done something to drive her away in the first place - had stolen her, made her his, had ruined the little hellion he himself had been falling for. And now there was a tiny piece of him, steadily growing in her, taking yet another opportunity from him. The hate festered.

He knew Delle wasn't blameless either, far from it; she'd disrespected his one request in their no-strings-attached relationship. Don't. Fuck. Negan. He had bent for her, looked after her, accepted her rejection, and she couldn't follow that one rule. It was as hard a smack in the face as she could've dealt him; maybe he hadn't handled Negan's brief absence as well as he could have, but their so-called punishment was too much and too far.

The pair of them were menaces. The man Negan had been when he brought Sanctuary up from nothing was gone, and the man he'd become was in no way capable or worthy of controlling the Saviors any longer. He may have created them, but the sun would set on Negan long before his army.

And Simon had every intention of making sure his family would be waiting for him on the other side.

Whatever scrap of Simon's conscience was left had died; it'd been swallowed by the dark, sung to death by the sounds of Delle's breath under his hated rival. Those two - three - had to go.

Delle, in the meantime, was properly dressed and overlooking the factory floor, watching the goings on of the surviving working class and the Saviors who still breathed. The Hilltop really had cut their numbers when Simon had attacked so viciously, brainlessly. Even in the aftermath of the punishment, Delle still wondered how the man who'd mounted such a foolhardy assault could've been the same man who'd welcomed her to Sanctuary. He'd been sweeter then; if he had remained so, even when Negan was presumed dead, he might not have been subjected to that live sex show. But he had been wicked, coercing and manipulative; so he got what he deserved. It felt fitting; and
Delle would hope he could put it behind him.

He wouldn't; but she didn't know that yet.

She shook her head at the starving masses; the plan had to work. They needed to clench their proverbial fist around the Hilltop's neck, but it was incredibly ambitious and, like many things associated with Negan, bordering on arrogant. Did they even have enough hands to cover every spot? To react, to shoot, around the clock? There were too many variables for Delle's comfort. 'But what else can we do?' She wondered inwardly. 'We're grasping at straws here...'

She turned away, setting out for Negan; he hadn't liked her straying from his side, and she found herself a better planner in his presence. There was still time to discuss the plan, tweak if necessary; and it felt necessary. She assumed he'd be with the lieutenants or weapons cache, and walked with purpose; until a familiar strong hand gripped her collar and pulled her into an offshoot closet.

"Hi Twisted." She shouldn't have been surprised that it was Simon - nor was she - but he instantly had her nervous. His eyes were darker than she'd ever seen them, like wet, rotting wood. Light didn't penetrate them in the slightest.

"Simon," she squared up, borrowing a little of Negan's bravado as her shoulders rolled back, her stance battle ready. "Do you not remember the new rule? You don't touch me."

"Yeah, with all due respect, that's asinine and backwards, girlie," he spat, taking a striding step towards her. His broad, strong frame blocked the door; Delle would've split otherwise. "Why single me out when you let the monster-in-chief stick his greasy digits god knows where?"

Delle's head dipped low, eyes narrowing. "Because I allow him to," she replied coldly. "I'm off-fucking-limits to you, bean pole. You've got nothing you're entitled to here."

Simon wagged his finger at that, kissing his teeth. The closer he came the more blatant it became that his height and weight outclassed her. "I'm entitled to what I've helped build here," he growled. "The Sanctuary, the Saviors; they need a strong hand and level head to lead them, and Negan doesn't fit that bill anymore. Not since you came along."

The undercurrent of his speech was obvious; he had no intent on letting Delle step out of that room still breathing. 'Fat fucking chance, bean pole!' "He's having to make up for your pig headed dick swinging, cleaning up your fucking mess! You need to back the fuck off and tuck your head down if you know what's good for you."

"What's good for me, and the rest of us, is the both of you gone," his black as death eyes dropped to her stomach, lip curling into a grimace. "And that little lump of psycho he planted in there."

'He did not just threaten my fucking kid,' her hand went instinctively to her belly, the other clenching in a tight fist. 'I'll knock his fucking teeth in!' "You get out of my way, Simon," she warned; he had her cornered but she wouldn't balk, not to him. "You lay a hand on me and Negan will string you up on that fucking corpse fence."

"You'll get there first," he snarled and lunged for her, going to grip her arms; before he could steady she had her fist driving into his stomach, getting a step back far enough to go for the door. "Fucking hell, get over here!"

"Fuck off, Simon!" She shrieked, hand in the door knob, pulling it open barely a few inches before
he had a grip on her collar again, his rage fueled strength dragging her back and throwing her into the wall. The wind was knocked out of her; and went unreplaced as his thick, powerful hands wrapped around her neck, hoisting her up the wall til they were eye level and she was losing air.

"I should've killed you the night we fucking found you," his voice was broken and dark with his fingers clenching around her neck, her pulse beating uselessly against his palm. "You're gonna die in here -- then I'll send Negan right where you're goin'." her skin was starting to bruise, her trachea barely holding up under the pressure; it was the best Simon had felt all day.

"S-si..." she croaked, her nails scrabbling at his arms, his wrists, all in vain; she kicked for the floor her legs couldn't reach and wished for strength, a miracle, Negan. "P-please..."

"You are long past please, Delle," he grit his teeth, applying more pressure and making her gasp for air that wouldn't come. "You and that baby... you're just another piece of him... and we don't need any more of Negan around here."

Her ears were ringing now, like alarm bells begging her 'breathe! Breathe!' When the very notion was past her control. The grip was biting now, digging in hard as her eyes began to spot and dim. 'N- Negan,' her mind was slipping into unconsciousness before it slipped into something more irreparable. 'Negan...our baby...' She didn't register being dropped, her body falling to the floor; she was dizzied and barely aware of herself. But her airway was opened.

And a familiar pair of boots were standing with Simon.

He'd been looking for her too.

"I told her I should've just killed you," Negan's fist had scuffed at the knuckle, catching on one of Simon's teeth as he had thrown a hefty punch into his jaw. Delle was in a heap in the closet behind him, and to the best of his knowledge he'd seen her gasp for air, but his mind was on track, razor focused on ending Simon. "Told her what you'd done wasn't worth redemption."

"Nobody in this shit hole is getting any redeeming, dick," Simon gurgled past bloody teeth. "Both of you... too wrapped up in yourselves to lead this place right--" he returned a blow, knocking against Negan's cheekbone, splitting skin; it was not well received, Negan thrusting his shoulder against Simon's middle and forcing him through the nearby doors to the factory floor.

Everyone would see this. He deserved a public and educational death.

"You've pulled your psychotic bullshit for the last goddamn time!" Negan's voice was a rampant roar, booting his former lieutenant down the industrial stairs; the rough, unforgiving cement imprinted and broke his skin, but he found his footing in time to dodge another hurried punch. "Thinkin' you can do what I do!? That you have the fuckin' fortitude to keep this shit running!?"

Simon's fist clocked him again, but Negan wasn't having it; he sank his hands into his opponent's collar, Simon matching his movements as each one tried to throw the other around the room. "You are fuckin' nothing, Simon!!"

It would've been all claws and teeth, meat ripped from bone, if they were beasts; as men it was fists and strength as the fight turned feral, every Savior all too aware of the grudge match, watching in a silence physically felt by all those present. They were the titans of Sanctuary; an evil mastermind, his loyal but maniacal right hand, now at lethal odds and trying to tear each other apart. It was obvious only one would walk away, neither without their damages; as fist after fist landed, boots met stomachs and chests, the war within the Sanctuary was coming to its head. Negan's reasonings were
"You shouldn't have lived past Oceanside!" Negan growled, taking Simon's relentless shoves and hits and throwing them back tenfold. "You were crazy then and crazier now -- and tryin' to kill my girl!? MY FUCKING BABY!?!" He didn't care that every Savior had heard it; they'd all see the bump soon enough. "You are a dog that needs putting down! Could've just taken your damn punishment and slunk off, could've got so much worse," he had a strong grip on him now, his arms wouldn't swing free; he could get him down. "And that's just what you're gettin' now!"

The ending was bleak and coming up fast when Negan finally heaved Simon's lanky frame into the concrete floor; even more apparent as he climbed over him and got a grasp of that neck. Simon would go the same way he'd tried with Delle. Painfully, feeling every last second.

"Y-you're both animals," Simon's final words were cruel and harshly meant; he wanted them remembered. He knew he wasn't getting back up. "And y-you'll die like animals."

"Shut up," Negan rumbled, the grip around Simon's throat growing tighter, cutting off any hope of speech - and air. "You got Saviors killed at Hilltop, and then you ran away like a coward! You got shown up one too many times; tried showing me up, hurtin' my family.... giving those goddamn fucks an out!!" It was over; Negan could feel the muscles in Simon's neck beginning to give way, his face going red, blood vessels popping in his eyes. 'No move to make.' "Those people, they are always gonna know that there's a loophole, a way to skate; they are always gonna be looking for that chance to push back," the windpipe under his grip was giving way; and the last thing on Simon's mind was the wish he'd never set eyes on Delle Cornish. "So now I gotta kill all of 'em just like I'm gonna kill you!"

The crack was deafening, sounding like a gunshot in the heavy silence; Simon's body stopped twitching, his long, strong limbs used under his own volition for the last time. Life had left him. The virus would have him soon, another footsoldier for the dead; but for now, he was nothing. As nothing as he'd been in life. Negan finally relaxed as all trace of movement left his victim's eyes, well and truly gone, for the time being.

"What an asshole," he panted, his bruised body climbing off the dead one, pulling himself back to his feet. "Somebody get this ungrateful fuck on the fence, he'll be a lesson--"

The resounding clang of a hand on metal had Negan's head shooting up to his favorite sight; Delle, alive. Definitely not well, but alive. She was panting herself, breath coming in labored rasps, the evidence of Simon's hands purple and black on her throat; she had a burst vessel in her eye, just as Simon did. It made her iris practically glow amidst the red. She stared down at the scene, the body, with determination... and unfinished business.

"Negan," she crackled, barely audible; but his ear would bend for her. "Give him to me."

Chapter End Notes

Wow, you guys are just so wonderful ♡♡♡♡

I'm sorry for being so insecure, I just get nervous when I don't hear things; I'm so touched and blessed that so many of you are still out there and still invested. I'm gonna
try and give you all the ending I have in mind, as best I can.

Next update will require alot of planning and minute detail so it might take a few days. Thank you all for sticking with me, I love you ♡♡♡♡

Comment if you like! Big chapter!
Chapter 115

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The last thing Dwight expected after merely a day in the darkness was the door opening again; even more so finding Delle at the other side. If he cared even the slightest for her, he'd have asked about her bruises, bloodied eye; or the blood on her fingers. But of course, he didn't.

"What the hell are you doing?" He was untrusting, obviously; he assumed she was there to take his life or to take him for torture. In fact, she wasn't.

"Repaying a debt," she huffed, hoisting a jacket and pack into view. "C'mon."

Dwight didn't budge. "This is a test," he decided, clenching his fists. "I'm not bitin'."

She rolled her eyes and threw the contents of her hands in at him. "There's a plan in place," she shared. "To send a few ten man teams, to set up weapons caches around Hilltop. Gonna starve them out," from her back pocket she slid out the very map that Negan had highlighted the intended locales on. She knew he'd recognize his chickenscratch. "I'm done. This is all too far. I know you've got a working relationship with that whole faction, tell 'em to get the fuck out of the way while they can."

It seemed plausible; and Dwight knew Negan's handwriting when he saw it. Still, with all she'd done, with all he'd done to her, he was wary. "Why do this? You wanted me dead."

"I want you gone, is what I want," she hissed, glancing out into the hallway to ensure its desertion; not that she had to. "I'm done with liars in our house, and I'm done waging wars with fuckers for no reason. You're gonna get out, get them moving, and you're gonna fucking go too."

He stood, cautiously, pulling on the jacket as he did so. "...you'd turn against Negan?"

She let her eyes drop, chewing her lip. "No... but I've got enough of my own damn sense to know a shit plan," she beckoned him out to the corridor when he had the pack on. "And this is one shitty plan. We'll have no foundation to build on, and we'll be stretched too thin. Best they get to going rather than Negan waste his time."

Night was falling again when she snuck them out to the courtyard, an old sedan ready and waiting; with all her covert rescues, she'd been lowering the total vehicle count considerably. "Drive," she ordered. She bet he'd been expecting his motorbike, but something that loud would bring too much attention, and be too open on his own. A car was safer. "Get them the map, make sure that kid is safe. I never want to see your face again."

He paused again, still thrown off. "This doesn't feel right, why--"

"I promised Sherry," Dwight grit his teeth to hear his wife's name on her lips. "I... I had plans to get her out, get her running, before she..." she shook her head, remembering Sherry's attacking corpse, all that blood. "I owe your family an escape. So go."

Dwight still wondered if it was at all true, if any of it was remotely possible. Delle had been kind once, she'd been trying for a long time, but she was Negan's now - how kind could she really be? He
posited that question as he followed her to the gates, loosing them with her help to allow passage; but the fence's latest addition had him stopping cold.

It had had skin, once; it must have. But now, the wretched undead creature was pink with exposed flesh and muscle, dyed a blackened red with dead blood. Where once it presumably had arms were now stumps, hacked off like the chop of a tree. Where once it must've had eyes were now hollow and empty, sockets staring at nothing while mindlessly gnashing its teeth; all from behind an immaculate mustache. The last vestige of hair and skin on that body formerly called Simon.

"Holy shit." Dwight's mouth fell slack, eyes wide; he'd seen Negan kill, but that was outright insane.

Delle's eyes flicked to the heavily mutilated body - admiring her own handiwork for a moment - then back to Dwight. "I told you," she whispered. "He's taking things too far. Just go."

He didn't need anymore convincing.

Delle watched the dust in Dwight's path as the car tore out from Sanctuary's view, into the darkness of the night. She knew the likelihood of him convincing Rick into running was low, if non-existent; she was banking on it. Rick was one minded now, and the concept of attacking a ten man team with the force of his remaining fighters was far too enticing. He'd take that bait, and with the guidance of the outdated map, he'd place himself and his army right in their open jaws. It was just a matter of snapping them shut.

She smiled, locking up the gates. 'Back to bed.'

When she finally crept up the stairs to Negan's room, he was waiting for her and her report in bed. Dressed down to nothing, the dark covers draped over his long legs and torso, and the bed looked that much more inviting as she tugged off her boots.

"How'd it go?" He drawled, reaching for the half sipped whiskey at his night table. He was completely up to date on her little plan; she'd convinced him of the changes as he'd rubbed a numbing ointment into the bruises of her throat, rasping out her plan. An ambush could indeed take out the Hilltop; but they had to do it right. And this time, they were.

"Couldn't have been better," she smirked, tugging off her denim to join her discarded boots, socks. "He took the bite like it was candy; and Rick won't be able to resist it either. Your head is a heavily sought after commodity, hon'."

"Seems so," he chuckled. Once she was in arms' reach he took hold of her waist, dragging her over his lap; he was gentle in pulling off the baggy black top, those scars still sensitive and debilitating. "Too bad I'm still usin' it."

Undressed and as comfortable as she could be, she crawled into her place at his side, shuffling under their blankets. Her body was still aching and sore, coated in trauma, but this was a part of her day she wasn't going to pass up. She'd spent far too many nights not falling asleep next to him. "I'm ready to see Rick bleed," she muttered into a pillow, stretching like a cat. "Ready for this to be over."

Negan ran his fingers across her hair, eying all her injuries; the scars of claws and arrows, the bruise of hands, the release of blood. "They'll be dead and gone, baby," he cooed. "But this ain't the end of the fight. There's always gonna be some new asshole who'll need smackin' down - they'll hopefully be less ornery than that prick, though."
"I am keenly fucking aware of that, you geezer," he smirked at his nickname, beloved and biting. "I'll not stop fighting or shit like that; the world isn't about to go all sunshine and rainbows just 'cause I'm pregnant and Rick finally bites it," her good arm propped up her body as best it could, a rasp still in her throat. "If you're fightin', I'm fightin'. I'm no kept woman, and I'm not lookin' for handouts."

He wanted to grin at her, but he couldn't stop his anxiety. She looked like she'd been rode hard and hung up wet; every wound she wore hurt him to see, knowing that in some way he had a hand in it. He wished she'd settle, if only for a moment, but knew that wasn't her way; his firecracker was built to fight, even if her body didn't hold up.

As if hearing his silent concerns, she caught his hand in hers. "It's going to be fine, Negan. Wounds will heal, and we'll forget Rick dickwad Grimes ever even existed."

"That's my girl," he forced that smile, lying flat and casting an arm around her waist. He peppered her face with kisses, making her sigh and melt; he needed to before he spoke. "But you're stayin' in the car tomorrow."

"What!?" She snapped, pushing herself back as far as his grip would allow. "Bullshit I'm staying in the car! I can fire a gun as fine as any other Savior!"

"Sweetheart, you didn't have the best aim even with two good arms," he smiled apologetically as she scowled and scoffed. "You can't lift rightie here all the way, you're knocked up, and your neck looks like one massive bruise. I'm fuckin' done with you gettin' hurt for awhile," her furrowed brow remained so, stubborn to a fault. "You can stay in the car or you're stayin' right here. Take your pick babygirl."

Her blood was up but her body was in no mood to fight; she was hurting, there was no denying that. Her shoulder still stung with damaged muscle, and as much as she wanted to keep arguing, it pained her to talk, even holding her head up was challenging. While she'd still eagerly throw herself into battle, she had a second being to look after now too.

"Fucking fine," she rolled her eyes and burrowed into her pillow again. "I'll be in the fucking car. But if things look sour for half a goddamn second I'm hacking those asswads to bits." She jammed a finger into his chest, sharp and committed.

"If things go sour? What happened to that unwavering faith in your man, Delle?" He pretended to pout and tugged her close. "You wound me."

She smirked, but fatigue was already swirling in her blood; she'd earned a rest. "Never gonna stop, pops; best keep on your toes."

Though sleep found her quickly, Negan laid awake beside her for the longest time, entranced by her unconscious form. She'd been through the ringer, battered and worn, but that strange beauty he'd fallen for in the first place still shone through. Like a crackling fire, her embers still managed to glow even as her fire slept. Despite her recent need of rescuing, this was a strong woman. She'd always been so; and though it had been her beauty that lured him closer, it was those gorgeous flames and undefeatable spirit that kept him there.

As such, he let himself worry in the privacy of his wakefulness for her safety, for keeping that spirit snugly lodged in her body. His hands kept drifting to her stomach, marvelling at the little thing within. That baby whatever-it-was hadn't shown any signs of distress, hadn't given in, even when faced with near death with its mother; if it was any indication, the kid would be a spitting image of its
parents, defiant, stubborn and undying.

"You're gonna be a handful," he murmured, soft enough as to not disturb her sleep; he was speaking to something that likely didn't even have ears yet, but he wanted the chance all the same. "A little hell raiser; but that's okay. Me and your mamma, we'll show ya how to use that. You're comin' into a weird, fucked up family, kiddo," he breathed deeply, trying to picture the face of whoever might pop out of her. "But I couldn't be luckier to have you... the both of you."

The plan was going to work. It absolutely had to. He had way too much life left to live for it to fail.

_________________________________

Bless their remaining, black beating hearts, the Saviors were ready for a bloodbath.

Every man and woman still fit to hold a gun were well supplied; Eugene had managed a monumental bullet order in miraculous time. It wasn't full rounds for everyone, but it was enough for at least a few shots in each firearm. Negan, with a standard handgun tucked into his denim and Lucille at his shoulder, stood over his last surviving Saviors, surveying like a King over his hordes. Barbaric though they were, they still followed; and after that afternoon, they'd be well rewarded for their efforts. At least, the ones still breathing.

He felt a small hand against his leathers, Delle joining him at his side; decked out head to toe in blacks and greys, his own personal red scarf knotted around her throat to hide her strangulation. Fang was slung across her back - a slightly different angle, to allow for an easier grip - to complete her readiness. She believed in him; but she needed to be ready for every eventuality. She gave a confident little smile and a sharp nod; things would work out.

"Alright, ladies and fuckin' gentlemen!" Negan boomed, raising both arms out to his well armed masses. "This is the day we end this, once and for all!! Now, you all know me; I'm a conflict resolution kind of guy," he brought a hand to his chest, shaking his head. "But there have been too many goddamn conflicts with this upstart band of shitheads for me to resolve anymore. I have been bit by these damn dogs one too many times. And today, we put 'em to sleep. Today, when they go down, they will not get back up," he smacked Lucille into the iron railing for punctuation. "Today, we bring an end to all those who killed our brothers n' sisters in arms," he glanced to Delle a moment. "We make this world safe again, make it ready for more poor bastards who need saving. This world," he stomped his boot for that one. "Is made for us, by us!!"

A collective roar of 'yes sir' vibrated up from the crowd; he'd saved them, he'd save them again. He would make them strong again.

Delle - with Lucille in hand - and Negan met Eugene and Gabriel at a carefully selected SV, dark and made for safe transport. She had to admit to double-taking when she set eyes on the priest; he was in no way the man he'd been at Alexandria. He was obviously sick, barely standing and seemed to have lost most of his sight. Sanctuary clearly didn't suit everyone.

"My resident genius!" Negan laughed, clapping heavy hands onto Eugene's shoulders; the sweaty little nervous wreck flinched, as he did with most things. "Talk about savin' our asses in the eleventh hour! You n' your little bullet makin' elves must've gone at it nonstop. Really. Kudos."

"M-My sincerest gratitude for the props, sir." Eugene and his strange speech.
Negan turned his attentions to Gabriel. "Shit, can you even see me, priest?"

"I can," his calm voice sounded hollow, maybe even despairing. "Barely."

"Peachy," he huffed. "Now you must know by now, you ain't walkin' away from today, yeah?"

The priest said nothing, but nodded. He'd not been the same since his little escapade out with Carson. His faith had been broken.

"Takin' it like a man, I can respect that," he chuckled wryly, moving for the driver's side door. "For that I'll shoot you in the head, instead of bashin' it in. You've earned it."

The former Alexandrians said little else as they climbed into the back seat of the car. "Hey," Negan's head raised at Delle's voice, her hand on the door handle. "We leave the boy alive."

He knew she mean Carl; he was fine by it though. Carl had shown his potential more than enough times; he knew his life would mean something down the road. With a nod and crossing his heart, the sidled in and got the engine going.

"Hey Gabey baby," his eyes were shining with something coy as they peered at the priest in the back seat. He didn't know where the idea had come from, but it seemed like his best one that day. Best in his life. "Gonna ask you to do me a favor."

"What could I possibly do for you now?" It was an exhausted response but honestly curious.

Negan looked to Delle, smiling as they raced down the forested roads, leading his army into battle. He had a good many dozens willing to die for him, fight for him; but all that really mattered was the one at his side. His fingers laced with hers tightly, giving a squeeze.

"This'll be a long drive," he drawled, paying little mind to road safety. This was far more important. "How 'bout you marry me and my girl real quick?"

Delle's head whipped towards him, mouth slack and gobsmacked. "What the fuck!?"

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for your patience and kindness guys :) reminded me that I can write what's in my head and it's totally okay - which is why I went for the FLUFFIEST FLUFF possible.

What do you think? I do love to hear from you all, I love my ever supportive readers ♡♡♡♡
Chapter 116

Chapter Notes

This is it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Before...

She knew he was in his office. She'd called first to make sure of it.

But for all the life in her she couldn't summon the nerve to knock; not just yet. Seconds ticked by, seconds she knew weren't hers but stole anyway; the seconds being all she'd have to hold on to in the after. 'Just a few more seconds,' she thought to herself, her nails digging crescent shapes into her palms. 'Just a few more seconds to call him mine.'

She hadn't knocked yet; maybe, if she was very quiet, she could inch back up the stairs, pretend she'd been busy, never do exactly what it was she was there to do. God she wished for that; the option to walk away without knowing all that she did now. Her part in the affair, the heartbreak, the cancer; and ultimately, her decision. She wished it would all just flee her brain, that she could go on in blissful ignorance, ride off into the sunset, get that happy ever after.

But that wasn't the after she was destined for. That wasn't what she deserved.

She hadn't knocked; and by the cruel hand of destiny, she didn't have to. His door opened unexpectedly, both she and Negan surprising each other. He smiled to see her; her stomach knotted in dread. "Hey beautiful," he drawled, stepping back to allow her in. "Was wonderin' where you were. Come on in."

"Thanks," she tried to hide the hoarseness in her voice, left over from sobbing into dampened pillows. The office looked the same as it always did; maybe with a few more papers on it than usual. She tried to memorize it, every chip in the desk, the faded linoleum, the overused filing cabinets. She wanted to remember, to be able to conjure it when she thought of happier memories with him. Far happier than the one she was about to make. "Were you just heading out?"

"Nah, steppin' outside to get better reception. You know it's shit down here," he picked up on a flinch as his arms wrapped her waist, but he took it to be a pleased shiver. "I missed you, babygirl."

'Fuck, why's he gotta miss me?' She bit down hard on her lip to keep the tears from falling, wrapping her arms around his neck like she'd never get the chance again. She breathed in; oh that scent, soap, sweat, musk and Negan. She hoped it too would imprint on her brain; these were all she'd have to hang on to soon. Fleeting memories, ghosts of experiences. Anything more would've been asking too much. 'I've done this to myself.' For as much of him she was trying to catalog in her head, the most prevalent thing in her mind was the image of his wife, standing in the bar, tears on her cheeks and a death sentence on her lips. 'She needs him... more than I do.'
It was the lie she'd told herself for three days. She hoped it'd stick.

"Baby?"

She snapped out of her self imposed trance to look up, Negan's face contorted in concern. Had she really been so lost in thought? "Sorry, what?"

"Was askin' what you felt like doin' tonight," he repeated, nuzzling his face to her neck, that all so familiar stubble searing her skin in a way once so welcome. "Could take you back to the motel, maybe drive out to the next town... you could take me home..."

Her blood went cold at the suggestion. She'd never really had previous suitors over, lest they square off with her nightmare of a father; Negan was even more out of bounds, given their numerous, illicit reasons. What gave him the idea that he was at all close to being allowed that deeply into her life? 'Yes, that's it, push away; it'll hurt less.'

"No, I um... I just needed to talk to you." She pulled her arms from him with reluctance, finding the sudden challenge of meeting his loving brown eyes. She opted for staring down at her hands, fidgeting with her fingers; and he started to realize something wasn't right.

"Sure thing, sweetheart," he didn't remove himself completely from her, he kept his palms resting lightly on her hips, as if keeping her steady. "What do you want to talk about?"

'I want to talk about how we can get the fuck out of this town,' she thought despairingly. 'I want to talk about packing up in the middle of the night and leaving. I want to talk about what you want from all this. I want to talk about how your wife came and begged me to leave you...' There were so many things she'd have gladly talked about instead; but only one had brought her to his office that day. She squirmed from foot to foot; she'd broken hearts before with ease, but then, she'd never been in love. 'Deep breath. Do it quick.'

"I... I don't think we should see each other anymore."

He didn't realize what she'd said for a moment. It literally sounded like a foreign language - maybe even beyond the sounds of human speech - but as the gears turned and finally clicked, he felt like the earth had just caved out from under him. "...what?"

She still couldn't meet his eye. "We...we can't keep doing this. I'm done."

"You're done?" He parroted back, nonplussed and, if he was being honest, insulted. Things had been fine; better than fine. They were getting closer and closer to being real, he was already considering jobs in new cities... and here she was, dropping an atom bomb on their relationship, like he was a meal and she'd had her fill. "Where the fuck is this coming from, Delle? We were fuckin' good--"

"To you, maybe," she snapped; if she could make him let go, get him to relinquish his love of his own accord, maybe it would hurt less. She was guessing. "But the hiding, the secrets... I just don't want to do it anymore."

"Then let's fuckin' not!" He threw up his hands, a dumbstruck scoff in his throat. "If you want people findin' out then let's set 'em find out! I'm good with it, people should know I love you--"

"I don't want that, Negan!" Her nails were practically slicing her own skin now, a welcome
distraction from the pain in her chest. "Our whole relationship was built on lies, lies and lust and shitty decisions made while drunk! And I shouldn't have to live with that anymore, all the toxic shit this was born from."

He blinked slow, his brows a hard knot above his eyes; if she could find the courage to look at him she would see betrayal, shock, his very heart breaking within them. "We love each other, Delle. It doesn't matter how this got started, I love you now more than anything."

"And what if I don't!?" She might as well have jammed her hand into his chest and torn out his heart, then and there. Stomped on it too, for good measure. "What if I don't want my brother ashamed of me anymore? What if I don't want to wake up in the middle of the night struck with guilt and regret?" 'Is this why she always sneaks off in the mornings?' He wondered, mouth slack. "What if I don't want to be with a man who'll die some thirty years before I will?"

"Is this about your dad dying?" He asked blatantly, lighting a frustrated flame inside her. "Babygirl I know I'm older n' all; but I swear I'm gonna love you twice as hard for the time I didn't have you--"

"Like when I was fourteen? In your fucking class; were you just waiting for me to age up then, you greasy pervert!?" That struck a nerve with him; he still prided himself as a teacher, wouldn't lay a finger on someone underage. Even Delle had the good sense to wait a year to go seeking him out, just to be safe - but she had to play this angle.

"Hey," he growled, firm and cross. "I'd never fuckin' do that, I'm not some kid-fucking piece of trash; you should know that."

"Should I? I'm still young, there's plenty I don't know yet," she muttered, still throwing her eye anywhere but on him. "I-I should get the chance to learn and make mistakes like anybody else; I wasn't looking to get tied down like a pet! I'm only 19 for fuck's sake!!"

This didn't feel like the woman he loved; she barely even looked the same, nervous, pale, eyes looking anywhere but at him. What had happened to have all this spewing out now? "Okay, you're young; you do deserve to learn, but why not do that with me in your corner?" He reached for her hand but she yanked away before he got friction. "I'm just tryin' to work out what's best for you."

"What's best for me isn't you," her voice was cracking now, despite her exhaustive efforts to remain stoic. 'Fucking christ, let this be over.' "Whatever this was, it wasn't good for either of us - my brother wouldn't even talk to me! Your life is completely on its head; no life has come out of this as better."

"Stop sayin' 'was' like this is over," he snarled, stepping in closer and towering at his full height. "I don't know why you're talkin' like this but you'd best knock it off; I know we've had shit to deal with and a good chunk of rough patches but fuck, I love you!! You make me happy, can't thank be enough for us?"

She started to back away, hitting the closed door. "No. It can't," she whispered, a rebellious tear sliding down her cheek. "Sure we had our fun, but good god at what cost? We've hurt everybody in our lives - I've been miserable because of you! Why would I want this to continue?"

'Because I love him. Happiness is enough, he is enough.'

'Stop stop it stop it!'
There was an anger in him now, an uncontrolled rage. He'd felt something similar that night he'd beat up Jordy, something dark was taking over. "I left my wife for you," he said softly, closing the distance between them again. "All I wanted was you; now you're actin' like this is all just some winter fling?"

For as softly as he was speaking, she could see the veins in his arms popping, his own knuckles going white with the clench of his fists. "I never asked you to leave her," she pointed out - it was true, she hadn't. Under different circumstances she'd have said he was right to, that even if their love wasn't real, Lucille still deserved the truth; but that wasn't happening. Not by a long shot. "You were the one who ran away with his mid-life-crisis; you were the one who couldn't let it just be sex. Go...go back to your wife, Negan," she swallowed thickly, and with it all the ache, torment and trauma she was putting them both through. "She can still love you like I can't."

He would hate himself for years for what happened; but Negan saw red.

"You little slut!" He roared, earning actual fear from Delle; the dark thing in him was controlling his body as his conscience begged him to release the iron hold he had on her wrists, his strength had thrown her against the door and knocked the air from her lungs. Those bright eyes were staring at him now, rimmed in bloodshot and drowned in tears. "You do not go runnin' out on me! I upended my goddamn world for you, and little miss whatever-she-wants thinks she can just shit all over it!? You do not get to walk away from this!"

"N-Negan stop--" her lip was quivering when she wished she was kicking; but her legs felt paralyzed, as did everything else below the neck. Yet another man, letting her down. "You're hurting me!"

"Maybe you'll fuckin' learn then!" He broke her heart right back, his long fingers digging in at her wrists, forcing out a shriek of pain. "You're everything to me, I've told you that for goddamn months, and you think you can throw me out like garbage? Like we were nothing?!" He was right in her face now, his better angels screaming for him to stop, let her leave, talk it out, anything but keep hurting her; the dark thing was not listening. "You do not get to do that. Not to me."

She hated the way she gasped when his mouth hit her neck; half fear, half latent arousal for the man she so persistently loved. It was the last time she'd feel his tongue, his teeth across her skin, leaving a clear red love bite; and he'd gone and made it so wrong, so terrifying. "N-Negan stop it..."

"No," he muttered, tugging her earlobe with his teeth while one thick thigh came up between her legs; she gasped at the pressure and tried wriggling away with no avail. "I'm gonna remind you, show you why we're good together -- stop fighting this, baby--"

A pounding at the other side of the door had both of them freezing; her eyes on him and his on the entrance. 'Fuck.' Time had run out for them.

"Coach Negan," he knew that voice; the school principal, Weisbraught. And based on her tone, she'd heard too much. "You'd best open this door before you get yourself in more trouble."

His dark eyes fell to Delle, and he had to assume the worst; she'd outed their relationship. It seemed she was in the business of ruining lives that day. "How fucking could you?" He hissed, letting his grip drop and her slip away. He steeled himself and opened the door, that natural grin finding his face. "Hey there Weisbraught. What can I do for you?"

One look at the other occupant in the room told Principal Weisbraught all she had to know; she'd
known Delle during her years at the school, but to look at her now was like night and day. Tears streaking her proud face, that red, wet bruise blooming on her neck, the way she clutched her shaking wrist; it seemed that it was all true. It was a shame; Negan had been a talented educator.

"Miss Cornish," she nodded slow, never taking her eyes off Negan. "Think it's time you went home."

Delle sniffled and rubbed at her face with her sleeve, eyes meeting Negan's with such palpable tension it felt like the air itself could snap. "Yeah," she agreed, stepping towards the door. Past her former principal she looked back, silvery eyes meeting Negan's one last time. *The very last time.* "Goodbye, Coach."

"Delle, wait a second--!" He moved to follow her but Weisbraught held up her hand, ceasing his pursuit. He was done for now.

"Negan, don't make this worse than it already is," she warned, but all Negan could hear was the sound of Delle's footsteps fading away. It was over; and with her leave she'd taken a light, a flame she'd fostered in him that didn't know he had, that he didn't know he needed. But it was gone now, gone like the flow of her hair and the curve of her lips. There was no coming back from this now. "I'm going to need you to clear out your office."

Negan would forever cite that day as one of the worst of his life.

_____________________________

Delle kept the tears at bay until she'd got home, collapsing under the weight of despair as soon as she got inside her room. Hyperventilating shakes took her, sobs that she could barely keep quiet; she paid no mind to Fang's banging at her door, too transfixed by the bruising the now ringed her wrists, for the hickey that no doubt grew on her neck.

She cursed Negan for doing it to her; for ever looking her way, for charming her.

She cursed herself for falling for it.

She cursed Lucille for coming to her, telling her about the illness she wasn't even sure was true, for begging her to end things.

She cursed herself for doing it.

She cursed Fang, tolerant but unsupportive, for shaming her at all, for making her question her love.

She cursed herself for not doing so in the first place.

It was a sleepless night had by all. Nobody had walked away unscathed; and like a wildfire is meant to, their love had burned everything to the ground.

All that was left were ashes.

Chapter End Notes
This was another hard one for me to write; I literally kept getting sick to my stomach whenever I got a few words down.

How'd I do? Was it as painful as you hoped? Let me know, I do love to hear from you.
"Why not get hitched?"

"I say again, what the fuck!?" He merely smirked as they travelled down the country roads, everyone but him properly shocked by his suggestion; the most being Delle. She blinked her wide eyes, a strange concoction of emotion stewing in her chest; panic, frustration, surprise...excitement? "What the hell are you thinking, asking that!? For fuck's sake this is not the damn time!"

"So you're sayin' there is a time?" Negan's smugness poured off his words as Delle pursed her lips in irritation. "If there is indeed a time for us to tie the knot, why the hell not now?"

She threw up her hands, looking back to Eugene and Gabriel who shared her equally gobsmacked expression, with the addition of fear. "Oh more than a few reasons!! We're on the way to kill an army of people, the guy you're askin' is literally your prisoner, you didn't even ask me first! Isn't that supposed to be included somewhere?"

"Okay, you want to get married?" His dark eyes flicked to hers, long enough to see a warmth spread across her cheeks; she was interested, that was clear, but fear outweighed her intrigue. He couldn't blame her; she never did have many healthy marriages to look up to.

"I..." she bit at her lip, eyes dropping to the padded seating. 'Get your happily ever after, Delle!' Her devils begged, cheering and whooping. 'Nothing to hold you back anymore!' She felt his gloved thumb slide over her hand, stroking gently but expectantly. "I mean... I guess I thought about it..."

"And what are your thoughts?"

She gulped. "Just that marriage has never looked all that appealing... everybody ends up straying or resenting each other, trying to get away," she hated that he was putting her in such a position, making her bear her soul in front of their passengers. "I didn't want that to happen to us."

"Delle, baby," he smiled, squeezing her hand. "I get where that's comin' from, but look at us. We've lived through the motherfuckin' end of the world, killed and fought god knows how many people, and still managed to find each other on the other side?" He scoffed, shrugging his leather clad shoulders. "If that ain't fate I don't know what is."

'Fate.' She didn't put alot of trust in that; it'd seemed it was fate that had pulled them apart in the place. "You'll get the chance to get sick of me this time..."

"That's not gonna happen," he said firmly; because it wouldn't. "One thing I've figured out in all this is that we keep walkin' into each other's lives; and that's 'cause that's where we're supposed to be. We can't keep doin' this, Delle - fightin' fate. Together is what we're supposed to be."

Negan, what with theatrics, melodrama, and jokes only he found funny, was completely serious. The outcome of that day was all but insured; but he wanted things proper and official should things - by some hideous miracle - turn the other way. If the day should win out in his favor, he'd spend the rest of his life with his bona-fide wife by his side; if it didn't, he'd at least have given her some fraction of
all he'd ever wanted to.

"C'mon Delle, why the hell shouldn't we?" Negan chuckled, tossing his arm gently over her shoulders. "I ain't goin' anywhere, you ain't goin' anywhere. You n' me, we're made for this shit - why don't we kiss on it and make it official?"

She looked up at him from the crook of his arm, seriously considering his proposal; ridiculous as the circumstances were, it didn't sound too bad. Alluring, even. Could she really have it? The future was fucked, any way she sliced it; but could it really be one that she could share with him? Was it really as simple as saying...

"Yes."

The gears in his head clicked, realizing her answer, and his head near spun. "Holy shit, seriously?"

"Yeah," she said, tossing him an incredulous eye. "Why the hell keep fighting? I love you," his heart swelled, grin practically splitting his cheeks. "And if you piss me off, I'll just kill you and take over Sanctuary. Win-win."

He threw his head back in a booming laugh, the car tilting slightly. "Well I'll be damned! Alright!! So, how 'bout it, Gabey?"

"You've killed my friends, kept me hostage, I've lost my sight because of you, and we're on our way to massacre the rest of my people," Gabriel had never sounded so cold. "There's no chance I'm marrying you two monsters."

Both of them looked back at him, brows furrowed in annoyance. Just like an Alexandrian to throw a wrench in their perfectly good plans. "Fine then," Negan huffed, turning his attentions back to the road but squeezing her in tighter. "If Mister Fear-of-God wants our baby to be a bastard, fuck him; I'll bless this union my damn self."

"Oh suddenly you're ordained now?" She teased, still a little giddy. "Should we be calling you Father Negan?"

"Nah, you're the only one I want callin' me daddy," he winked, straightening up. "It's my damn world, so if I say we're married, we're fuckin' married."

"Wow, so romantic," Delle wasn't about to stop ribbing him, even given their matrimonial drive. "Catch my bouquet, would ya, Eugene?"

"You want some vows or something? I'll give ya some fuckin' vows," he ran his hand across her arm, thumbing her scars. "I love you Delle; have for years. Never really stopped, I don't think. I'm sorry for the years we lost, I'll always regret those, but we've got plenty more on the road ahead," he ducked his head to kiss her hair, breathing that intoxicating scent, so unforgettably her. "And I'm gonna love you more for every day we have. I'm all yours, baby; no gettin' rid of me now."

She was used to his romanticism; but something about the context had her choking up, reaching across him as best she could and hugging him tight. "I love you too, Negan; I hate a fuck ton of things, but not you. Even at our worst... I don't think I ever hated you. I know we won't have forever," she pressed a cheek to his warm leather, closing her eyes. "But I'll take everything I can get. Now hurry the fuck up and wife me."
He wasn't waiting a second longer. Flitting his eyes to the road for a moment, he turned and pressed his lips into full contact with hers. It was one of their more innocent kisses, held long and firmly, but it meant more than so many others had. Who cared whether or not some priest gave the O.K? If she wanted to call him her husband, she would; and he would so willingly do the same.

"Hot damn," he purred, pulling away and turning his attentions back to the road; they were drawing closer to the appointed ridge. "Knew I'd wear you down eventually, you little shit."

It earned him a smack against his arm. "Shut up you fucking geezer."

The sun was beating down on the expansive hill as the Saviors readied for attack; it would've been beautiful if not for the fact that golden green grass would soon be painted red. Eugene was sweating bullets but was more than reassured that his ammo could bring down the bulk, if not all, of the Rick lead army. "Can attempt a real fell-swooper," as he put it. Negan's commands left his troops on their bellies, waiting out of eye line for the militia to be in just the right position to get truly fucked. For short notice, he'd made things move in rapid fashion; the decoy team who had died to direct Rick and gang in the right direction, the survey teams that promised their arrival all too soon. The man was made to lead, made to plan, made to win; it was just a matter of waiting for the losers to show up.

Til then, he had time to spend with his wife.

"You know we could be consummating our union," she teased, yet all too comfortable curled into his arm, steeping herself in his presence. "Make an honest woman out of me."

"We can save that for tonight, babygirl," he smiled, his fingertip tracing the edge of cheeks. "Or whenever you're healed up. We've got time."

"We've got time." She repeated, a soft smile on her lips; for once, the horizon didn't look so terrible. The plan would work; but in the world they lived in, a healthy twist of dread in one's stomach never really left. It was simply their reality.

"Negan, sir," one of his subordinates, Norris, tapped on the window, earning a glare. "We got word from the scouts. They're almost here."

He took in a sharp breath and nodded, waving his hand before turning to Delle. "You stay in the car, wife," he kissed her again, smiles thinning both of their lips. "I'll get this shit handled. You keep you and our baby safe."

She smirked and nodded; but before he could leave she tugged him back, a harder kiss on his mouth. Something about it tasted different; but she couldn't place the flavor. "If it comes down to it... you keep yourself alive. There's got to be an after all of this. I love you."

"I love you too." He gave her a wave on his way to the ridge; Rick and his pals were already coming into view. 'Showtime.'

Carl's stomach twisted in on itself when he heard that distinctive, roar of a voice brimming from all directions; they should've never listened to Dwight. The string of Saviors not fifty feet away had the perfect vantage, guns trained on every one of them; his friends, his family. They couldn't see them yet; but they would shortly and short-lived. He looked to his father, who, for the first time since the
Alexandria attack, looked terrified. All out of answers to questions he didn't understand.

"Would you look at that, Rick! Fucked again!" A laugh like thunder filled the air, every ear. "Fucked so very hard!"

"W-Why don't you come out n' face us!?” Rick shouted as loud as he could; but it was nothing in comparison to Negan's amplified voice.

"You'll see me when I want you to, Ricky dick," he chuckled into the megaphone at his lips. "Guess what else I did! I brought you some of your old friends. You remember your old buddy Eugene? Well, he is the person that made today possible; every bullet about to make its home in your sorry hides was born from his smart-ass hands!" He would've gave his bullet maker a pat on the back if it weren't for the handgun he had aimed at Gabriel's skull, Lucille tucked under arm. "And Dwighty boy of course; now he wasn't tryin' to double cross you, he is just a a gutless nothin' that sucks at life. I'll make sure he knows that when I track that gnarled bastard down and kill 'im myself," he gave the nod to his Saviors, his loyal men; it was time to kill. "We are cleaning house today, Rick. And then there's you. It never had to be a fight. You just had to accept how things are. So here we go. Congratulations, Rick," 'Time to pick this fuckin' thorn out once and for all.' "Three! Two! One! Now!"

And that was when that day started to become the second worst day of Negan's life.

Fucking Eugene; he should've known better than to trust the sniveling little pig man. But as his hand bled and ached from an injury caused by faulty ammunition, as he watched his people fall to the same injury or to death itself, he knew he had to run. In the pandemonium and onslaught of the Alexandrian army barreling towards the surviving Saviors, he had to make a break for it? 'Stay in the fucking car, Delle!'

Delle, of course, was already out of the car. She was already out in the field, and though Negan couldn't catch the traitorous bastard, she had Eugene pressed into the dirt, Fang at his throat.

"You yellow-bellied cocksucking cowardly bastard!!" Her voice didn't even sound like hers, it was like an animal roaring, a beast howling. It wasn't inaccurate to how she was feeling. "I should've killed you at that fucking RV!! BRAVERY GETS YOU KILLED, EUGENE!" She reared back, ready to slice that meaty throat clear open; but hearing Negan's voice over the din of gunfire and screams drew her like a magnet. She moved to run for him; giving Eugene a handsome scar across his face before she ran for it. Pity her legs weren't faster.

Rick and Negan were squaring off as they should've been the whole time; man to man, throwing each other against the roots of a gnarled old tree hung with inexplicable stained glass and beating at each other with the force and anger of two warring storms. Even with a bloodied, broken hand, he was giving Rick his worst, Lucille cracking at his enemies limbs, his back. Even if he lost everything, even if the Sanctuary fell to ruin; as long as Rick was dead and he and Delle were walking away, he could rebuild. But Rick needed to die first; and with blood now seeping from his side, it seemed he'd at least have that.

"You're beat," Rick gasped, limbs weakening but standing strong. "Your people are down... give up."

Negan - panting too - shook his head, Lucille aloft. "I'll get out of it. I always do. It's just you and me, Rick. And you...you are torn open," he'd be lying if he said the sight of Rick bleeding profusely wasn't ever so satisfying. "I am bigger, I am badder, and I got a bat."
"T-then stop," Rick begged him, raising a hand to keep him back. "A-and listen - we...we can live peacefully, Negan..."

"Not on your life," Negan growled. "Which will be ending shortly."

"N' what happens to you when my people catch up with you? With Delle?" Negan stiffened straight to hear Rick say her name. "You want to be alive for her, don't you? Don't both our families need us around?"

Negan should've never lowered his bat; but for a split second, he doubted his odds to ever set eyes on his brand new wife, on his kid-to-be. And in that split second, Rick made his move.

'When did he even get a shard of glass?'

He fell to his knees, bare fingers futile in trying to stop the river of blood from his throat. The golden grass was indeed turning red that day; red with his own. With every second, every drop that gushed out, his strength was leaving him, life beginning to release itself from his body. At the hands of no-account, dickless, shame of a man Rick fucking Grimes.

"Look what you did," he gurgled, blood sputtering in his throat. "Less of a man than I thought..." he dropped to his side, vision starting to swim when he heard her screaming, saw her racing towards him.

"No!" She shrieked, hands pressing down at the fountain of blood from her husband's neck, bubbling up between her fingers; her broken throat ached from screaming, but she couldn't stop. "Negan don't you fucking dare!! You can't fucking die, not today, not on me!!"

He was starting to lose his consciousness, his weak hands just barely brushing hers; maybe it was the oxygen leaving his brain, but she'd never looked more beautiful. Maybe it felt like the last time he'd ever see her, all over again. "I-I told you to stay in the car..." the darkness was starting to slip in, like clouds billowing in across a bay.

"No, please!! Negan stay with me!" The tears were flooding from her eyes now, all her strength going into keeping the seeping wound closed; she'd not felt so hopeless, so devoid of life, since that night at the broken window, Fang slipping from her grasp. Her screams and sobs filled her ears, she could barely register the voices around her, the yelling of others; and she lashed out in every which way when arms she couldn't identify pulled her away from his stilling body, bloody hands trying to scramble back to him. She could hardly recognize Sidiq kneeling over Negan, couldn't understand the familiar young voice in her ear; her own consciousness was starting to slip. It had grown too much. She couldn't let him go again.

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Pain. Pain and light and feeling; how could he be feeling? Sensations didn't seem like something for the dead.

'You're not fuckin' dead, you dumbass.'

"We know you're awake." A woman's voice; but not the one he wanted to hear. It sounded like Rick's main squeeze.
"I never said I wasn't." Negan's voice didn't sound right; hollow and hurting. It was very much his opposite. When he finally willed his eyes open, his blurry vision focused on Rick and indeed Michonne, looking ridiculously smug.

He'd lost.

"Good, your eyes are finally open," Rick drawled. "Because we're gonna make you watch what happens. And this isn't about who you killed. No, we've..." he glanced to his love, flicking back to Negan. "We killed people. No, this is about what you did to us, what you did to so many people. How you made people live for you, how you put people under your boot."

"Like you didn't?" He rasped; Michonne readily drew her sword, happy to end him then and there.

"Michonne!" Rick warned, a hand on her arm.

"He needs to know!" She hissed, but pulled back.

"And he will... he's got a job to do," Rick turned his attentions back to Negan. "That's right. You'll have a job, too. Yeah. You get to be a part of it. You'll be an example of what this will be. We're not gonna kill you, we're not gonna hurt you. You're gonna rot in a cell. For the rest of your life, day after day," that all sounded terribly limiting - but he had bigger things to think of. "You're gonna be evidence that we're makin' a civilization, something like what we had, something we're gonna get back. And you get to watch it happen. And you get--"

"Rick I'm sure you've got a hell of a righteous tirade planned here," Negan's personality demanded Rick to shut his mouth; he needed an answer to a very specific question. "You can throw me down in that cell, do whatever you want; but just tell me," his dark eyes met the man's steely blues. "Where's my girl?"

Rick and Michonne shared a long look; something contemplative, tense. Finally, Michonne sighed, looking down at the beaten leader of Sanctuary who's only concern now laid with the family he'd never have.

"We didn't kill her," she said with some renewed kindness. "But... the stress got to be too much."

'No, don't you fucking say it.'

"She died."

The room suddenly felt devoid of air; like the entirety of human emotion had stepped out. In that moment, that moment of despair renewed and felt so bare and so raw, Negan decided. They had to be lying.

"Bullshit."

Chapter End Notes

This is not the end, I swear!
There's only 3-4 chapters left here folks; we're right on the edge now.

Drop me a line, let me know what you think!!
Chapter 118

Chapter Notes

Pretty huge amount of time passing in this one.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Days had gone by, and Negan was settling into his new, incarcerated flow of time.

He knew it passed; as he felt his beard growing thicker day by day, his stitches healing into a thick pink scar, and waking to a fresh sun, he knew the world was still turning. He remained steadily adamant that his precious girl, their child, they were both fine; no matter how much they told him otherwise. Delle, his darling, she wouldn't die from shock - what a pussy way to go. He knew through sheer force of will she wouldn't have let herself die that way.

Yet as days turned to weeks, the words 'She's dead' began to grow more disheartening.

Once the skin had healed, ensured that it wouldn't open on its own, he was moved to where he would live the rest of his life - alone. He was driven there, a bag over his head, tied up; wasn't freed til he was behind bars again. Cinder blocks, a bench and toiletries; it was like they'd cut a cell out of a prison just for him. It was underground, but the air smelled familiar. If he had to guess... Alexandria. All the while Rick smirked from the outside of the cage, like a hunter who'd successfully trapped a tiger. Smug and arrogant.

Negan didn't much care what he looked like; he just asked the same question he always did. "Where's my girl?"

And Rick gave him the same answer. "She's dead."

It was the most exhausting part of it; even through being left alone for days on end, hearing voices from the outside - nothing he could make out - with nothing to do but think to pass the time, all he dwelled on was her. It pained him that the last time he'd seen her, she'd looked so sad; bloodshot rimming those bright eyes, tears streaking her cheeks. He'd seen that face the first time they'd been dragged apart, his own blood being the important difference in the second time around. He wished she'd stayed in the damn car, maybe she'd have been safer, maybe she wouldn't be...

'No,' He shook his head in the darkness of his cell, running his poorly nursed hand over his face, his ever lengthening beard. 'My girl isn't dead - she wouldn't die on me like that. I didn't survive this shit for her to go before me. Not a fuckin' chance.' It was cold comfort in his colder prison. She was alive; he just needed to see her.

Rick visited; he was the only one allowed to. Every meeting started and ended the same way; he'd ask for her, he'd tell her she was dead. That was one reason he didn't believe him; Rick didn't rub it in. He didn't make a fuss over her supposed death, didn't go on about how Negan had got her killed, got his baby killed; it was always the same two words. For as self satisfied he was about the whole situation, his solemnity when discussing her was a piece that just didn't fit.
They talked for ages; about everything. How it had been Carl who'd finally convinced Rick into saving him, into making him an example. If it weren't for the boy, Negan would've been rotting. He'd wondered if he could really thank him for that, or if it had been the boy's closeness with Delle that had really saved him in the end. They talked about how he'd come to rule Sanctuary, how things had turned out the way they did; Rick was making an effort to try to understand, to see Negan as a human being. It was more than he'd ever tried to do during the war.

Oftentimes they talked about what life had been like before. How he'd known his beloved she-wolf for years, the circumstances of their relationship, the terrible things they'd wound up doing, what he'd made her do by telling her lies, omitting the truth. He admitted to wishing to turn it all back; honesty from day one, and maybe they would've lasted. Maybe she wouldn't have walked away.

"So," Rick's twang bounced off the concrete walls from the free side of the bars. "You've always been a lyin' bastard then. Should be ashamed of yourself."

"I am," Negan didn't see a reason not to be truthful now; if this was his life, why fuss? Besides - good behavior could bring his girl back. "And I have been; but I'm never gonna be ashamed of her."

"Sounds that she was as much a part of it as you were."

Negan shook his head - Rick wasn't about to be understanding. With his morals, his high horse, he'd never see her as more than a homewrecker. "No, she just fell in love; I'm not lettin' anybody fault her for that. That girl... she's a scrapper, life's been shittin' all over her for years and she's just been pushin' back as good as got... she's a motherfuckin' war goddess. I'm always gonna be proud of her."

It was true; Rick would never really understand. He'd only ever been on the outside of an affair; he'd never known the pains and complexities of the heart. If he even still had one.

The weeks tumbled into months; they kept him fed and watered on bread and water. It was enough to keep him alive, enough to keep breathing; but he hoped wherever they were keeping his Delle she was eating better, that their baby was growing strong. Revenge became the furthest thing from his mind; he just wanted the truth. He just wanted them safe.

And still they told him she was dead.

He wondered why they were putting up such a front; what purpose did they have in telling the lie over and over? The reasons and excuses spun in his brain night after night; had she made a break for it, escaped their grasp? If she hadn't, was she being held captive? Tortured? Did she wish not to see him, maybe she'd reasoned that thinking she was dead would make life behind bars a little less terrible; knowing he wasn't missing out.

'Or maybe she's just dead.'

It'd been months; long, slow and excruciating in their isolation. He was staring into his usual cup of water under a thin trail of light, the only reflection he'd seen of himself in ages. He was getting more salt than pepper in his hair now, the lines in his face seemed deeper. Had it been longer than he'd thought, or was stress just taking its toll? It was getting colder, he knew that much; Rick, in his infinite mercy, had supplied a slightly thicker blanket to keep him from hypothermia, and the days were growing shorter. It'd been more than half a year, he was certain of that - but at some point he'd lost his count.

'Could she really be dead?'
The nights were stretching on, and he was loathe to admit the lie was beginning to stick. He felt as if he was losing his grip; with the cold had come doubt, worry, and despair. Still, as Rick's visits grew farther apart and shorter, he asked the same question; and that answer was starting to cut away. He'd trade away anything for confirmation that it was all a lie, to see her again; not that he had much to trade. He truly thought his mind had slipped when he woke to what sounded like her screaming one night, his name shrieked in her voice through darkness; but it had been so faint and he'd been half asleep. He suspected it'd been some dream.

Of course, he had no way of knowing that was the night his child was born.

Delle too had not had an easy go of things, as she woke from the events of the ambush on the ridge; but she had a gentler hand to help piece things together. When she finally opened her eyes, it was a familiar freckled face and single blue eye gazing down at her.

"Carl--" her voice was rasping even more now; her shrieking only having done more damage on her windpipe. But that wasn't going to keep her from asking questions. "What the fuck happened?"

"You're gonna want to stay still, Delle," he said gently; but a pull of her arm showed her she was cuffed to yet another bed. 'Are you fucking kidding me!?' Before she could yell he was thrusting a cup of water into her free hand, setting down beside her. "I pulled you off Negan, after my dad..." he shook his head with a grimace; he'd never been so ashamed of his father. He'd been there, he'd seen it - Negan would've surrendered. He'd been vengeful. "We had Sidiq check you out. He'd been vengeful. 'We had Sidiq check you out. You're... definitely kind of messed up, but you'll be okay. Your baby is okay."

She listened carefully to the boy, his explanations for what she'd missed. The remaining Saviors had indeed surrendered, and had found tenuous leadership with Laura, of all people. She'd come a long way from gossiping in the inventory room. Delle had been taken to Hilltop, the nearest and best equipped medical location.

"I had to tell them you're pregnant," he confessed, nearly making her spit out her water. "They were ready to throw you out! I-I couldn't just let that happen, not after everything you've done," his eye met hers. "After saving me."

"Fine and dandy then; but I think you're beatin' around the bush, kiddo," she swallowed the last of the liquid, steeling herself for the tragedy she felt on her horizon. "Where's Negan?"

Carl pursed his lips, his hands fidgeting in his lap. He wasn't comfortable with the plan Rick had decided on; that the wolves of Sanctuary would spend the rest of their days thinking the other was long gone. Why should she have to suffer? She had at least tried to be better, tried to find some peace. "He... he's alive," he watched as her eyes went wide, her breath catching in her throat. "But I can't let you see him."

"Why the fuck not!?" She snarled, gripping the glass tightly. "That's inhumane, keeping us apart!"

"I know, I don't like it any more than you do," he shook his head in shame. "He's taking the worst of it, believe me..."

She wasn't sure what that meant; but if his heart was indeed beating on, that was something at least.
"So what happens to me now? To all of us?"

He seemed to brighten a little; though she didn't understand why. "You're... you're coming back to Alexandria with us," he explained. "Given your... current state, they'll have you under house arrest. Sidiq is making a home there, he can check on you til it's time. After you have the baby..."

"It's all up in the fucking air again isn't it," she set her glass aside and pinched the bridge of her nose, a headache impending. "You know, this would be alot easier if I had the baby's fucking father with me."

"Delle, you have to know he wasn't getting out of all this without punishment," she did; but she didn't much care for that fact. "and this... this could be your best shot, your kid's best shot. You can be your own person without him."

"I am my own person without him," she clarified, brow furrowing. "I survived on my own for years without him at my back; but I lost him once... I let him go, and I don't want to do that again," her expression turned to something pleading, something hopeful. "Do you think there'll ever be a chance for us...?"

Carl's face was grim; it was hard to picture a future where the two might be allowed to even set eyes on each other. "It... it doesn't look good, Delle."

She shut her eyes. "It never does."

It was an adjustment, that was for certain; but Delle was used to being a pariah. She didn't spend long in the makeshift sick bay before being sequestered to Alexandria; the walk from the trucks to the small, solitary house she'd call her home was one watched by all the surviving residents. Even the other leaders, Maggie - she herself already beginning to show off a bump - and Ezekiel, had bothered to watch. Gabriel was present, though he could barely make out her figure as Rick and his son marched her into her new prison.

It wasn't the worst place she'd ever been; a few rooms, only slightly singed by the bombings, and had been set up with a bed at the very least. "Didn't realize you'd have me stayin' at the Ritz, kiddo," Delle whistled as she sized up the cramped kitchen, honestly a little taken aback to find vitamins on the counter. "You thinkin' about my health?"

Rick scoffed; but he was trying. His son was right, peace could be made - and if he could make an upstanding citizen out of Negan's prized possession, all the better for the cause. "You uh... your kid'll need 'em," he sniffed, eying his boots. "While it's growin'."

Her hand found her stomach, thumb stroking her skin through her shirt. "Really? Even when it's the spawn of negan?"

His bright blue eyes met hers, straining. "It didn't choose who it's parents are," she raised her brows. "Just raise it right. Won't matter who the father is."

'Matters to me.'
Over the oncoming weeks and months, her only company would be the Grimes men and her steadily expanding belly; whoever was taking shape inside her, they were incredibly resilient. A war wasn't going to keep it from being born. It was all the company she had, and she found herself rambling on in length to her captive audience; her life, before the world ended, the child's father, who he was. She'd even discuss the weather with it. She was grateful to run her hands over her bump, though felt a little silly when she got choked up the first time it kicked; only to grieve when she couldn't grab Negan's hand, show him herself. She didn't pay any mind to any former embarrassments over missing him, loving him; she only wanted him there. But she settled for letting Carl feel the unborn child's strength when he visited.

Rick didn't come by as often as his son; maybe on some baser level he was ashamed to have robbed a child of its parent, or maybe he was just getting sick of her asking about said parent. Either way, they fought like dogs whenever he'd stop by.

"When are you gonna let me see him?" She asked abruptly one autumn day, tugging the edges of a discarded cardigan around her belly; it wouldn't be much longer. "It's been months, Rick."

"It'll keep on bein' months," he growled in response - that baser self went unheard, his need to maintain his power over the two wolves was paramount. "You don't do all that you both did and not get punished for it. Be glad you got the kid to keep you company."

"I'm not askin' for much here!" She shouted him down, her hands coiling into fists; the mamma bear within her had really made itself known. "I know what we did, and I know what YOU did; you killed plenty, just like us. So you get to sit all high and mighty, absolved of your fucking sins just 'cause you won?" She was in his face now; Rick truly uncomfortable. She was still a formidable little thing, healed and well and sturdy; pregnancy worked for her. "You get to walk away with your family, while we spend our days forgetting what the other looks like?"

His face was dark, glowering. "You took from plenty of families here," he threw his arm out, gesturing to her meager surroundings. "You're livin' better than any fuckin' prisoner ought to; how 'bout you count yourself lucky on that?"

"I'd live in a damn pit if you'd just let me fucking see him!" She snarled back. "Show me he isn't dead, that you're not just torturing him!"

"He ain't dead," Rick declared; though he'd broken plenty of truths since it'd all begun, but that at least was true. "And if you can't see your luck on that, maybe you'll see it in gettin' to keep your baby."

Her arms immediately wrapped around her ball of a belly protectively. "You're not laying a fucking hand on my kid - if you're just keeping me alive to pop this baby out and steal it away then you're a bigger monster than I ever took you for!!"

It was all talk; although there was undoubtedly danger in letting a singular woman care for a new born in isolation, he wasn't about to take the kid from her. He wouldn't stoop to that level. "Straighten up your act and you can keep it." He'd ordered of her, leaving her to her lonesome again. As she so often was.

The day was ending into a cold wintery night; and she'd spent the knowing things weren't quite right.
Carl had been there since noon, talking, discussing the rebuilds of Alexandria and Hilltop, the status of Sanctuary, bringing in colder climate supplies, and sometimes just sitting in silence. They'd found a comfortable, even ground with each other; an unspoken bond agreed upon by both parties, one that meant a hefty chunk of time spent together. They'd begun to be able to read each other, and when Delle winced at her stove top, stirring away a soup of root vegetables, Carl knew something was happening.

"Delle?" His hand was on her shoulder; familiar and supportive. He saw her grit her teeth behind parted lips, her eyes tighten for a moment; he'd seen such tells before. "Delle, you..."

He didn't even get the words out before he felt a wetness on his socked foot; a glance down showed a darkening spot in the crotch of her pants. His eye went as wide as hers did, meeting in silent panic. 'Oh no.'

"Fucking hell," she grunted, clutching at her middle; she'd felt movement and twinges throughout the day, but kept putting them off. Now, as her waters dripped to the floor, it was certain - the kid was in a hurry. "Shit shit shit shit fuck!"

"It's okay!" Carl tried to be calm, helpful; but anxiety was ringing in his chest, his last delivery having gone so tragically wrong. She groaned and arched her spine, something painful twisting in her core; it filled him with dread. "Let's get you to your bed, I'll go get Sidiq!"

"Run like the fucking wind, champ," she gripped his arm so hard her nails sliced his skin, waddling her very pregnant body to her mattress; thin, but better than the ground. "Ugh... I think this kid wants out and quick."

He ran, and though he left the door open - something he was expressly forbidden to do - Delle couldn't even consider escape; the kid was ready to go, even if she wasn't. And fuck, did she feel like she wasn't. 'Negan, fuck,' tears pricked her eyes, a little in longing, mostly in pain. 'Negan you should be here, fucking hell you need to be here...' She sobbed in a pained moan, feeling like she was splitting open at the hips. 'We fucking need you!'

"Delle!" Her eyes sprang open at Sidiq's voice, Carl red-faced behind him. He carried an emergency kit with him, the boy's arms heaped with towels; it was going to be a long night.

It'd been hours, stretching into the night; most of Alexandria was awake and listening to the she-wolf scream. Birth without pain inhibitors was a nasty business. Rick had dared himself to the front door, but didn't enter; the soon to be mother didn't need the stress of him in the room.

"Fuck just cut me open!!" She pleaded, soaked; tears, sweat slicking her hair and clothes to her skin, some bleeding and tearing as she tried to force the child from her body. "Please, fuck I can't do it anymore!!"

"You're close now, Delle," Sidiq's hand patted at her knee, pants discarded as he monitored the delivery. "Just got to get past this hump, I promise--"

"Fuck you!" She sobbed, gripping Carl's hand tightly; he'd not let go - or travelled south of her hips - since setting the towels down. "Fuck you, fuck Negan, fuck his stupid dick, fuck this whole damn world! AH!!" Another twisting stab shot through her body; the kid was determined to split her in half.

"Delle i-its gonna be okay," Carl was white as a sheet now, terrified but trying to be strong. "You're
"You're doing great."

"You try pushing a watermelon out your asshole then!! I'll tell you you're doing great!!" Tears poured out, Sidiq beseeching her to push. "Carl, please, I can't do this without him, please--"

"Crowning!" Sidiq confirmed. 'Oh fuck.'

"You can do this," Carl's hand caught her hair, his gaze caught her bloodshot eyes. "You got this far on your own; you've got this, you've got your baby."

"Push!"

In the swirling tide of pain, her body feeling torn apart down to the molecule and pulled back together, she wished for a man who wouldn't come. She wished and hoped for strength, his strength, as she forced her body into its instinctive act; pushing against impossible pressure, like in a moment she'd snap, like the world would fall away completely. It was the worst pain she could ever experience, so all encompassing that she nearly passed out; but then, a pop, a rush of relief.

A cry.

"Fuck..." Delle's sobs turned to whimpers, her emotions shifting into shock and awe as Sidiq wrapped a wriggling pink body in a blanket; the tiny thing screaming it's lungs out. It was over; having only just begun again.

Afterbirth whisked away quickly, the young doctor was all too pleased to place the baby on his mother's chest. "You have a son," he spoke gently, as if too big of a sound would spoil the moment. "Congratulations."

She didn't speak for awhile. She just nestled her newborn boy in her arms, studying his face. She saw Negan's olive skin through the red, their mutual dark hair; he wasn't quite ready to open his eyes yet. He seemed to calm in her proximity, recognizing the smell of the woman who'd made him, nestling into her damp clothes. It didn't matter to him what she'd done, what circumstances had brought him there; she was his mother. That's what he needed.

"G-good job, Delle," Carl's voice was awkward; he was unsure of what to say. This was the first successful birth he'd been present for, and suddenly he felt like he was intruding. He looked to Sidiq, who was doing away with sullied towels, wondering what his task was supposed to be. "I uh... can I get you some water?"

"No," Delle murmured, unable to drag her eyes from her boy. He was cooing softly, humming in blissful contentment. "Just stay for awhile."

He nodded hurriedly, running a hand through his lengthening hair; he wished he could run to Negan's cell, not fifty yards away, at least tell him he had a son. But Rick would collar him the second he stepped out. He'd have to settle for comforting the new mom, living and now numb to her own pain; she was too distracted.

"What're you gonna call him?" Carl's question seemed silly; there was only one name she could think of, one the boy deserved. She hoped it would keep him safe, like a charm; even if she wasn't around to look after him. "Please don't say Negan."

"No," she smiled as her son opened his eyes for the first time; matching silvery bright orbs stared up
at her, waiting for his title. "His name is Eric."

Chapter End Notes

You all knew I couldn't do our girl wrong like that didn't you ;p

I've never had a kid personally, but being an overtly romantic person, I like to think this is how I'd feel about it.

How'd I do? Drop me a line and tell me what you think :)

Chapter 119

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Before...

'What the hell am I doing here?'

By the time Negan had worked out the whole story, it'd been too late to go hunting her down. Finding out Lucille was sick had him wracked with a new kind of guilt, a hopeless breed over which he had no power. All he could really do was be there for her - which he chose to do, much to her delight. Her husband was back; even though his heart would never be.

The move to Indianapolis was a struggle, only made worse by her ailing health. The cancer was hitting her hard, and Negan was left to play the dutiful caregiver to her dying body; staying by her side through consultations, rounds of chemotherapy, reassuring her through nights spent vomiting, the loss of her hair. She was grateful for it, his presence; but it only mounted on his guilt, how with every second spent with her, his mind was on Delle, back in their podunk town and wondering what the fuck had happened.

As far as he knew, they'd been good. Sure, their relationship was far from perfect, but they were so close to being out of the woods - and she had to go burn it all down. If she truly didn't want him anymore - a thought that had his blood boiling most nights - why did she need to salt the wound by telling the school board the truth? Though Weisbraught told him over and over that it'd been an anonymous tip that had shed light on his 'mistake', he couldn't help but draw parallels between the timing of it all; of course they'd be caught in the act just as she was leaving him, just as he'd lost his temper. It'd only add to the case.

He wanted her, but he wanted answers more. In the weeks and months that followed their calamitous split, he'd tried to reach out to her countless times. Voice mails, texts, checking the bar; but the woman had not wanted to be found, and she kept it that way. He'd find himself staring at her number on his cell phone, just wondering; didn't even care whether Lucille could see him doing it. The silence was driving him mad.

It finally grew too much, and Lucille had to break it.

She'd spilled the truth. Maybe her resolve had been weakened by the chemo, or constant pain; maybe she knew she didn't have much time left. But loose lips finally gave away what she done; what she'd asked of Delle, how she'd convinced her to do her worst.

They'd fought after that; well, as much of a fight a cheating husband could have with his cancer patient wife. He'd been furious, but what right had he to be mad? His actions had pitched their life into chaos, undone years together; all she'd done was get him back in her hour of need. It wasn't too much to ask, but nonetheless; he felt robbed.

"I'm goin' away a couple days," he'd packed a few things into a small duffel, his back to his wife. "I'll call you from the road."
Her frail arm had barely supported her body against the doorframe as she watched him go; she thought she'd feel lighter for having told him, had dared to hope the girl was finally out of his system. She had no idea he was in her blood. "Are you... are you coming back?"

He paused at the door to the small apartment they now shared - a stone's throw from the hospital - and turned to face her. She was barely a ghost of the woman he'd loved once, hardly a memory. That honey brown mane had disappeared, her eyes had lost their light; she was all skin and bones, pain and blood and radiation. It was hard to be angry with a dying woman; but he couldn't help it.

"We'll see," it was cryptic, hopeful to him but heartwrenching to her. "Why... Why'd you put it on her to do it? Why ask her to hurt herself so badly?"

Her eyes - which seemed to almost always be teary - welled up, trained on him. "Because she... I needed you, more than she did," she said softly. "You'd have never been able to do it."

He shook his head, moving to leave again. "Would've made sure you were looked after..." he muttered as he opened the door.

"Negan?" That voice was as broken as her body was. "If I'd asked you, told you about the cancer... would you have left her?"

The door was already shutting behind him; she didn't need to hear the words to know the answer was no.

'What the hell am I doing here?'

He mopped his hand over tired eyes, his body having relied more on muscle memory than sight by the time his surroundings had turned back to his old town. He'd driven through the night, the sun just rising overhead as he pulled up in front of the familiar apartment building. Her apartment building.

What was he going to do? He really didn't know. Maybe he just wanted to talk, tell her he knew she'd left him for Lucille's benefit, give her a little cold comfort in both of their pains. Maybe he wanted to ask why she'd told the school board what they were, to make the severing a little less severe. Maybe he just wanted to kiss her, hold her like he used to, love her like he was supposed to, and finally ride off into the sunset together. And maybe she didn't want any of that, but damn it if it wasn't all entirely at the top if his list.

'She could be happy to see me,' He thought to himself; though as images of his hands on her wrists and tears down her face conjured in his brain, he knew better. 'Maybe she'll let me apologize... hope she'll let me do that at least.' If anything else, she had to know he's never intended to hurt her or scare her; he should've focused, gained perspective. He wouldn't make that mistake again. He breathed deeply, the sunlight at his back reflecting orange and pink in his rear view mirror; until a figure engulfed a chunk of it in shadow.

It was a Cornish, but it wasn't Delle.

Fang's chest rose and fell with gasps, half for air half born of anger; he knew that truck well, and as he finished his morning jog at its bumper his blood was on fire. He knew Negan had seen him when he'd frozen in his seat, giving the young man the opportunity to move to the driver's door. The window already rolled down.

"Fang," Negan said softly, fatigue audible in his tone. "I--"
"What the hell are you doing here, Negan?" His jaw was set, body ready to punch if needed; he wasn't letting his sister get hurt again.

"I... I just want to talk to her," he explained, raising his hands in surrender. "Lucille... she told me what happened, how it was never Delle's choice; I just wanted--"

"To ruin her life again?" He spat; Cornish venom still pumped through his veins. "Lucille might've asked for it, but Delle was the one who decided enough was enough. She doesn't need you anymore."

His brow furrowed, eyes a little darker. "That may be; but she still deserves an apology for how I acted and what I did."

"The best apology you could offer would be to get the fuck out of here," before she saw he was here, he hoped. "Your sorrys aren't any good."

He was getting out of the truck now, Fang just barely a few inches off from is height; he had to see her but he didn't want to hurt her brother. "Then an explanation! I just want to know why she told Weisbraught--"

"She didn't," Fang admitted; this, even Delle didn't know. "I did."

The truth genuinely sent Negan reeling; somewhere along the way, Fang had decided his sister's judgement was shoddy and taken over for her. "What? You-you got me fired--"

"You could have been in jail for all the shit you were getting away with," Fang was admirably resisting the urge to punch him out. "She deserves so much better than all the bullshit you put her through; she deserves more than your lies and broken promises!"

Negan's dark eyes blinked; this was hardly the boy he'd once trained. He was a young warrior, protecting his family; even if she didn't need protecting. "You took that choice from her, both you and Lucille--"

"She needs happiness, Negan!! Security!" Fang almost had him backed into the side of the truck. "She needs more than some asshole cheating gym teacher could offer, and I'm not letting her hurt when the next young piece of tail comes along for you to chase!" He opened the truck's door. "She's got a real shot at being happy now. Don't you go being selfish and demanding her back. She can't survive you again."

The kid was wrong, plain and simple. Negan loved her, he wasn't going to stop; and she loved him. Their happiness would never be perfect, it would come in short spurts; but the time they would have together would be glorious. That's what she deserved - glory. Love. To be treated like a queen like he always promised.

And as the highways took his truck back out of that small, accursed town, never having set eyes on her, he doubted he'd ever get the shot to show her all that he knew. That his heart was made for her.

________________________________________

"You're late!" Delle called from her room as she heard her brother get in fr outside; he'd been 10
minutes past his best time. "You're getting lazy!"

"Ha ha!" He snarked from the other side of the door; learning sarcasm from the best. "Can't win all the time. Come out soon? I'm starting breakfast."

"Sure thing." She should've been getting dressed for the day, getting ready for more work; but she was doing what she spent nearly every morning doing then.

Staring at her 9th grade yearbook.

The faded felt tip message was the only physical piece of him she had; from long before he'd looked at her that way, long before the first kiss, first fuck. This was as close as she ever thought she'd be as she mouthed his message to herself.

*You're a little shit,  
Don't lose that fire in your belly  
You'll do great things.*

-old fucking geezer

The fire still burned, but it had grown cold. She could live without him, she had for years - but she didn't want that. She wished for anything, a do over, a second chance, a reset; all of which she was so sure she'd never get.

Neither of them had any idea of the life fate had planned for them both.

Chapter End Notes

This is the very last 'past' chapter guys, and the next one will be the last all together. So close to the end.

I promise I'm not trying to milk this, but it's my birthday this weekend so the very last chapter will take a little extra time to write

I'll try to be quick, but I won't rush  
Leave a comment if you like :) thanks for reading, I love you guys!
Chapter 120

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

How long had it been since he'd heard those screams? If he was right - he dreaded he was - it'd been more than a year. More than a year he'd been granted the slightest inkling of her being alive.

Didn't keep Negan from asking, though. He'd keep on it; unless they showed him a body, he wouldn't believe them. He spent most of his time thinking of how she was faring with his little hellspawn; she hoped the kid wasn't giving her too much grief, that she loved it as much as it needed. He wondered who it took after; whose eyes did it inherit, whose nose, who's smile? He wondered if it carried the recessive blond gene he knew ran in her family, wondered if she'd given him a little boy or girl. The wondering, the conjurings of a happy child in his head kept his heart warm most days, the thought that even without him there, she wasn't alone.

But even the most determined heart grows tired.

It was getting warmer again, the days longer; at some point Rick had granted some unknown Alexandrian the task of bringing Negan his meals. That was a change, Rick's visits became so infrequent, seemingly months in between now. Something was happening; his utopia wasn't as perfect as he'd planned it to be. His last visit had revealed as much, the man obviously thrown off and worried. Though Negan might've fallen, there were still far worse things in their hellish world to face. Rick would be an idiot to think otherwise.

It'd been weeks without speaking a word to another living being; he'd stopped trying to talk to the poor delegate who brought his meager meal each day, knowing that the poor devil had likely been fed all the terrible stories of his actions before imprisonment. It was a healthy fear to have; if not for the possibility of Delle's life being threatened if he wasn't compliant, Negan would've busted out and snapped as many necks as possible on the way ages ago. But that was the version of him that had ruled Sanctuary, the tyrant; and that self was dwindling down to nothing. He was as close to docile as he'd ever be; he just needed his girl. His family.

That day the sun was casting long beams of orange light across his cell, another sunset he wouldn't see on the outside. He was already curled onto his tiny cot, absentmindedly running his fingers through his beard; it was so long now, as was his hair. Two years had added length and snow to his appearance, his trademark black hair fading just as his tyrannical nature did. He was in the midst of a day dream about his darling girl, admittedly one particularly raunchy. She was just about to peel off her panties in his mind's eye when he heard two loud bangs against the cell's bars; it could only be Rick, and Negan found his ardor cooling rapidly.

"Been awhile, Rick," he mumbled against the wall. "Where's my girl?" It was like a prayer at that point.

"It's not Rick."

It was the first clear voice he'd heard besides Rick's since being incarcerated; and one he recognized. He sat up and turned, met with the younger Grimes; Carl. The boy had been aging too, almost a man now. His long hair pulled back, he'd finally grown into his face and was sporting some cultivated scruff on his jaw. He was starting to really resemble his father; but what had him there?
"Carl," he chuckled, drawing himself up as to his usual height. "Look at you, went and grew up when I wasn't lookin'. On your way to bein' a man!"

Carl's expression didn't change; it was dour, something sad but fiercely committed. It was a face that made more sense on him now that he'd aged some. "I was starting to wonder if he really was keeping you alive down here."

"For some dumbass call," Negan's arms shrugged at his sides. "Where's your old man? Is he finally loosin' the reins a little?"

Carl's eye sank to the ground, an immediate, crushing sorrow filling him up. "My... my dad's dead."

Now that, he hadn't been expecting. Rick fucking Grimes, the headstrong moralist dictator who'd slit his throat and overthrown his empire - dead, just like that? It seemed impossible. As baffled as he was, he could see the pain of loss reflecting in the poor boy; it was an emotion noone should have to feel, and one Negan had felt too many times.

"Fucking shit," he shook his head and bowed it, in honest condolence. "I'm sorry, kid. That's one shit hand you've been dealt. How... how'd it happen?"

Carl shook his head, pursing his lips; their new enemy - cloaked in the dead - would require a massive explanation, one he didn't want to have then and there. "He... I can't talk about it right now."

"Alright," if Negan had learned one thing from his sentence, it was cooperation. No need to poke his fingers into a bloody wound. Either way, he had bigger questions on his mind. "So... what brings you to my little hole in the ground?"

Carl's eye scanned the tiny surroundings Negan had been forced into, the total isolation of it all. He was no less deserving of his punishment, but Carl knew very well the lies his father had committed to. And nobody deserved that. "It is a hole, isn't it?" He seemed cryptic, mysterious. "Like a big gaping wound, right in the middle of Alexandria; and you're like the knife, still stuck in and twisting."

'Fuck, is this little bastard gonna stab me?' It'd be fitting; one last act to honor his father. Negan's head tilted back, concerned but unafraid. "What's your point, kid?"

Carl stared at Negan with a swath of mixed emotions. Nobody had really been on his side about this choice, but it had to be done. Enough was enough. "It's like any wound... you have to take the knife out to really heal," he produced a set of keys from his back pocket and did the unthinkable; he unlocked the cell. "And it's time we all had the chance to do that."

_____________________________

It'd been a challenging year and a half, to put it lightly; but at least she wasn't alone anymore. Having Eric around had been a big change. Sleepless nights were still a common occurrence, she'd had to cut her hair shorter to keep from having it yanked, and keeping him fed was sometimes a fight - he was more interested in running around than eating - but no matter; he was fine company all the same. Delle would talk to him constantly, stories of her old life, what the world was before, how she'd survived after it had ended. A captive audience had turned her into a talkative thing.
With the arrival of her baby came a few leniencies around Alexandria. Maybe they saw motherhood as softening her - not that it had - but at an agonizingly slow pace, certain citizens dared a little closer, and as they did, she was allowed a little further out. It became a regular sight to see her at the edge of the fence that circled her house shaped prison, and for the most part, Alexandria wouldn't fall into panic. It was about as normal of a life as she'd ever had.

Someone was missing, nonetheless.

She'd still ask, beg that she could at least see Negan, and Rick had consistently told her no. She contemplated asking Carl to take Eric to see him, give him a little relief in his imprisonment - but she didn't trust Rick not to see that and feared he'd take her son. Frustrated and limited, she settled herself on stories. She'd told Eric everything she knew about his father backwards and forwards, drilled it into his brain the man she knew Negan to be. She didn't spare him their darker times, the mistakes they'd made; she knew he'd hear it eventually, best that it came from her. More than anything, she told him how Negan had loved her; how he would love him too, if he'd hurry his ass up and get to them.

The day had been as productive as any other; she spent most of it with Eric, who was trying to mimic words now. He was growing up fast, and was a voracious learner; he took after his namesake there. He'd tuckered himself out to the point of exhaustion, curled up in the makeshift crib Delle had next to her own meager mattress. It was one of the few moments in the day she was by herself, and she found herself staring out the window of her kitchen, studying the bright orange rays of sun that soaked the steel and wooden walls of the community, the wrought earth that would eventually be another garden. The world was growing around her, advancing, and while she was glad to have her boy at her side, she wondered if she'd live out all her days locked in that house, and if her son would face the same punishment. As Rick had said, he couldn't help who his parents were, but she didn't trust anyone but Carl with his care. What would his fate be when he aged? Would he resent her for her actions, for getting him stuck in the same four walls forever? Or would the Alexandrians eventually get fed up and steal him away?

Would he forget her?

She sighed and tried to push it from her mind, hearing the front door to the house open; Carl was due for a visit after all. He'd grown up nicely, and of all the Alexandrians, he was the only one she tolerated.

"Carl? That you?" She called from the kitchen. "I hope you're not sniffing around for my cooking, unless you brought some tomatoes you aren't getting shit."

"Delle."

Her heart nearly dropped out of her chest; she knew that voice anywhere. Husky, all too familiar, she knew it from a whisper into a roar. That voice she never thought she'd hear again. 'Oh my god,' she had to actively force feeling back into her legs, taking slow steps, apprehensive steps, as though if she moved too fast the world would crack, she'd lose her chance; and that wasn't about to happen. 'Please let this be real,' she begged inside her head, wondering if it was a cruel dream. 'Please let this be over.' She walked through the doorway.

And there he was.

Hair and beard thick and growing whiter, his eyes were shining with unshed tears as he stared at her,
shocked and relieved; he knew it. His grin could've split his face in two as she stood there, beautiful, baffled and very much alive.

"Babygirl," he purred, daring a step. She seemed stalk still, though he could see her shivering in her shoulders. Her raven mane had been cut shorter, barely gracing her shoulders, and she looked tired, but good lord he'd never seen something so pristine in his life. "I missed you so much."

"You're late you bastard!" Her words were harsh but her actions sweet; in lightning speed she'd crossed the few feet between them, crushing her arms around his middle. She was equally amazed to find he was real, solid and warm as his arms pulled her in as well, and fiercely determined to never let go of him again. A long, deep breath brought his scent back to her, and the dam within her broke; tears streamed down her face, soaking his tshirt as those hands she'd craved so deeply stroked her hair, warmed her back. This was as home as she'd ever felt, as she'd ever hoped to feel. "Making me wait... fuck you."

"I love you too, Delle," he laughed, burying his face in her hair; long or short, it still smelled like her. "I'm sorry I was gone so long; you know I hate to keep a lady waitin'. A certain prick kept tellin' me you were dead."

"Please don't call my dad a prick," Carl's voice startled her, but she wouldn't leave Negan's arms as she glanced past him to the young man. "Out of respect for the dead, at least."

Her mouth gaped, realizing the news. Though she still hated Rick, and couldn't fathom the bond of a healthy father/child relationship, she still sympathized with her friend. "Oh fuck, Carl... I'm so sorry."

He shut his eye, nodding along. He knew she was swallowing alot of hatred in saying that. "Thanks," he murmured, hurting still. The people who had cost him his father were going to pay, the fire in his belly said so; but with Rick's passing, his outdated laws would die too. One of which specifically pertained to the two wolves before him. "It... with him gone, we're going to need some power in our corner. There are threats we'll need all hands on deck for."

They were both taken aback at that; it had been years since either of them had fought, and though both were still strong, they also doubted the likelihood of any Alexandrian truly trusting them on their side. "Not your best plan there, kid." Negan shrugged.

"He's right," Delle added, her fingers still tight at his back. "We did terrible things to your people. What's to keep a vengeful soldier from taking us out?"

Carl glanced between the two expectant faces. "My dad... his idea of keeping you here couldn't last forever," he stated. "He wanted you to be cautionary tales, monsters under the beds of everyone here. He wanted an example of the type of evil that wouldn't stand in his world," he stepped in a little closer. "But I don't think that's true of either of you anymore. Do you think you'd go back to how things were? Given your freedom?"

Negan's eyes fell to Delle again, her bright orbs gazing back up. "No," he mumbled honestly; the darkness that had lived inside him felt nigh on nonexistent next to her now. He had atoning to do, all around. "I'd fight for her, but... I think my Sanctuary days are over."

"The same for me," Delle nodded. She was suddenly excited for Carl to leave. "I've got more important things to worry about now."

The young Grimes breathed in ease, having gained what he'd been hoping to hear. "That's what I
thought. His way, his wasn't one of peace," he granted Delle an encouraging smile. "Peace needs forgiveness, redemption. We all need to heal... and you'll do that best together."

Delle finally slipped out of Negan's grasp, only to throw her arms around Carl in gratitude. "Thank you," she whispered, his plaid darkening with salty tears. "Thank you so much, kiddo... for saving him."

Carl smiled - genuinely, for the first time since his dad's loss - and squeezed her back. "You saved me first," he muttered, pulling back. "I owed you one."

As she returned to the safety of Negan's arms, she looked back up to him. "Not to kick you out, Carl, but get the fuck out. I need some time with my husband."

It took less than a minute for him to leave the pair alone. It took less time for Negan to pin her to the wall.

"Baby," he groaned, fervently attempting to meld their lips together as one. "I knew you were alive, that fucker wouldn't convince me," he was pawing her shirt over her head, feasting on the skin underneath. 'God she tastes so sweet.' He was pleasantly surprised to find her tits had swelled somewhat in his time away; more for him to love. "Fuck I need you so bad..."

"I need you too, Negan," she gasped, his mouth curving along the slope of her neck, her fingers strung through his hair. God she just wanted to throw him down and ride him into oblivion then and there; but there was someone he was due to meet. She gave his hair a hard tug as his hands came up to her tits, his dark, lusty eyes watching her. "Fuck... hate to distract you from your talents... but did you want to meet your son?"

He froze; Negan, the man of many words, was speechless. He only nodded.

Eric was slow to wake in his mother's arms, plucking him from the drawer-turned-bassinet where he slept. She cooed over him with a gentility only ever reserved for her little boy, a kindness made for him that had her bouncing him in her arms as she finally got to do what she'd been wishing for. "Negan," she spoke in a breathed whisper, carrying their boy to where his father stood, dumbfounded and awestruck. "This is Eric."

The little thing in Delle's arms was more than Negan could've ever wanted. He choked on a sob as he ran a large hand over his son's black hair, as a matching set of Delle's bright eyes peered up at him through the lazy grip of sleep. He could see himself in the boy - his olive skin, his nose - as much as he saw her traits as well. A perfect concoction of the two of them.

"Fuck me sideways," he chuckled, drawing a thumb over his boy's forehead. "Right when I thought my day couldn't get any better... you went n' gave me a son."

"Hard fucking work, too," she smiled, their child clearly having issue staying awake as he grasped at Negan's fingers. "I wish you could've been there, when he was born."

"Me too," he agreed, wrapping his family up in long arms; she found herself loving the scratch of his beard against her forehead, the quiet hum of Eric between them. This - this could be a life. "Don't you worry, though - I'll be there for the next one."
She looked up incredulously with a cocked brow and a lopsided smile. "Next one?" She snickered, bouncing Eric against her chest, off to sleep. "If you think I'm pushing another watermelon sized offspring courtesy of your cock out of me, you are sorely mistaken you fucking geezer."

'Good lord did I miss that.' He smiled and pulled her into a fresh kiss. They'd missed near everything about each other, the fighting, the teasing; the very worst parts now fondly cherished. "We'll see about that, you little shit," he growled against her lips. "I've been known to be very persuasive."

That night they barely slept. Sharing stories from their time apart, Delle catching him up on the people of Alexandria, the fate of the Sanctuary. He'd not been surprised to hear Dwight had managed to escape with his scrawny neck, but right then he didn't care. He had her back, he had his family. She hoped the Alexandrian population would see the change in Negan as much as she did - he just wanted a shot at life now. Like anyone else.

He spoke to their sleeping baby incessantly; silent murmurs of who he was, how he'd protect him, how glad he was that his 'badass mamma bear' had been there for him while he couldn't be. It was true, she'd kept him safe, kept him love; but the boy was in for double with his daddy around. Their little unit would prove to be a force to be reckoned with, Negan swore it up and down; even if he looked a little awkward getting him to burp.

With Eric settled for the night, they made love. It was a reunion of bodies, of kindred souls as they melted into one, a passionate flurry of lips, hands, soft touches and quiet moans as he filled her so completely. Their eyes didn't part as he pressed inside, every thrust an oath that she'd never be without him again; she dared to believe him. Their bodies didn't part long after he'd spent himself in her confines, his heat spreading inside her like liquid fire. He held himself over her, stroking her cheeks, watching her carefully and unable to keep the grin off his face. This had become the best night of his life.

The dull grey of morning was beginning to grow across the sky, soft kisses pressing across her shoulder. The future was coming on fast, and a healthy fear had settled in them both; but worry wasn't in their minds. Not yet.

"You know, they aren't gonna be happy with us walkin' around," his warm browns met hers, silvery bright. "Gettin' used to their ways... its gonna be hard."

She kissed his lips, confident for a change. "When has that ever stopped us?"

It wasn't perfect, but they were finally granted the time they'd so eagerly pursued for so long. Dawn was breaking over Alexandria; and in the light of sunrise, the day seemed bright.

Chapter End Notes

Well... that's all folks!!

For now.

Maybe this will have a sequel one day, maybe it won't; but this is the ending I wanted to see, for better or worse. .
Thank you all so much for sticking by me here; its been a crazy ride, and I'm so glad you all gave me a chance to see this to the intended end.

Keep an eye out for more stories in the future, ask questions, leave me comments; I love you all ♡♡♡♡♡

End Notes

First time writing for TWD; feedback appreciated!

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