Daring the Devil

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/5914165.

Rating: Explicit
Archive Warning: Graphic Depictions Of Violence, Rape/Non-Con
Category: F/M
Fandom: Daredevil (TV)
Relationship: Matt Murdock/Original Female Character(s)
Character: Matt Murdock, Original Female Character(s), Franklin "Foggy" Nelson, Karen Page, Original Characters, Claire Temple, Frank Castle, Father Lantom (Marvel)
Additional Tags: Explicit Language, Child Abuse, Romance, Mild Gore, Fluff and Angst, Eventual Smut, I Don't Even Know, Other Additional Tags to Be Added, post-first season, Breaking the Fourth Wall, Slow Build, Minor Character Death
Stats: Published: 2016-02-05 Completed: 2019-10-13 Chapters: 10/10 Words: 101464

Daring the Devil

by RedMoon616

Summary

"It all started one night, in a dark alley, away from the public eye..."

She didn't know what turn of events was waiting for her that night, neither could she prevent them from taking over her life with a destructive force that will only bring her down before raising her even higher.

Notes

This is my first fanfic and I'm not really good at writing about characters that I didn't create myself, so try to bear with me. Also, I'm not a native English speaker, so there might be a lot of errors. I'll try to correct as much as I can, but if you want to help feel free to, I would really appreciate it.

See the end of the work for more notes.
Demon in the night

Chapter Summary

"Haters gonna hate, amirite?

Just kidding! I'm a nerd playing the Daredevil card on bullies."

Chapter Notes

A little introduction of some of the characters. Short chapter, longer ones to come!

It all started one night, in a dark alley, away from the public eye. I was taking a beating from one of my regular bullies and his dad. Usually, it’s only the guy and his goons. I could take that, you know, the three of them kicking my ass to the ground. I’m used to being treated that way since I was a little girl. Big guys are always picking on me because I’m smarter. Not my fault that I value intelligence over strength. It’s not like I could beat them anyway, even if I exercised.

So I was there, on the filthy and wet concrete of the alley, trying to block out the pain and on the verge of passing out. My eyes were closed and I could smell the strong scent of blood, my blood. I could even taste it in my mouth while I was holding down the urge to vomit said fluid, among other unpleasant ones.

Apart from the agonizing pain, I was aware of other details around me. There was the raspy feeling of the asphalt beneath me, the strong odor of the dumpster next to us and the sound of sirens going off in the distance; so far away, too far away. They were talking to me, insulting me, but I couldn’t care less. I was too fixated on something that I hadn’t noticed before, or rather say…someone? Footsteps, on the ground somewhere near. Somebody was coming, maybe to help me or maybe not. I was so terrified that I could only hope that whoever it was, he or she would stop them.

Seconds passed like hours, everything seemed to slow down for a reason unknown to me. The kicks stopped completely at the same time that I heard screams. I slowly opened my eyes only to find two unconscious bodies lying next to me on the ground. Above them (breathing heavily), was a man wearing a black and red costume. I recognized him instantly; Daredevil, also known as the Devil of Hell’s Kitchen. Considered a criminal, a vigilante or a hero; it depended on who you asked. He looked at me, strangely, but said nothing. I stood there, paralyzed, watching him in awe. Before I could say ‘thank you’, he disappeared again into the dark. I was saved by the Devil; ironic, right?

That’s the story of how I met him. I can still remember perfectly every single aspect of that encounter; like I would forget anyway. He didn’t only save me from those guys, he saved me from myself. No, I wasn’t on drugs or suicidal, but it was self-destructive the way that I let everyone push me down into the mud without putting up a fight. Since then I changed a lot. Now I fight back, every time and no matter what. Most of the time I lose, but I always get up. I don’t give a shit about the
pain or the risk. My life used to be ruled by fear, but not anymore. It was holding me back, now I’ll use it to push me forward. Daredevil inspired me to be more than a simple nerd.

I decided to take his example and become some kind of amateur vigilante myself. Of course, I don’t go after mob bosses or take down whole companies with dirty businesses in the back, but I do what I can. Defend the weak and topple the scum. Every bully I can find, for example. The ones I know, and the ones I don’t. It takes a lot of time and effort, apart from the pain and exhaustion of course. But it’s worth every single defenseless kid that I save from a bad beating.

You’re probably wondering how it all started. I’ll tell you, it’s simple. I like reading and learning, not necessarily studying, but you get it. It was like this since I was little. I always got A’s on tests and did all my homework. My mom and my teachers loved this, the other kids not so much. They wanted me to help them, do their work for them and tell them the right answers for every exam. I naturally said no, contrary to what most little kids will say to an older and menacing boy or girl. They kicked my ass for it, every time that I said no. And I let them do it. It wasn’t like I could stop them from doing it, so what was there to do? If I fought back it would have been worse, so I didn’t, until now.

I asked my mom if I could take self-defense classes at the local gym and she said yes. I knew she was going to accept, she’s always worried about me because of the beatings that I take from the bullies. She tried to help, but she couldn’t. You know why? Because the system is fucked up. That’s the exact reason why the Devil appeared in Hell’s Kitchen; because he knew it and decided to take action, sick of being another bystander turning a blind eye on the crimes that rule this city. I’m fed up just like him, and just like him, I decided to step in and do something about it. My mom didn’t approve, but also she didn’t find out until I got caught by the inefficient police itself. I say inefficient because they arrested me, the girl trying to defend those who can’t from the ones hurting them. I don’t understand their logic, and if there’s any...then I don’t want to understand at all. It will only add more to my rage.

So, I was passing by a basketball court when I heard some screams and wails coming from the inside of the yard. I went through the open fence door and saw a bunch of teens punching little kids who hadn’t reached puberty yet. What a bunch of assholes. I didn’t need to think twice about taking them in a fight. Long story short, I ended up bloody, like them, but the kids didn’t suffer further damage. The police were alerted by a freaked out neighbor who saw the fight, and they came running like it was a mob war or something. The dickheads got away, I wasn’t so lucky.

They took me to their car and drove to the police station. I was fucked, my mom was going to kill me, or at least I thought that. As soon as we arrived, they pushed me inside the building. I remember seeing a lot of people, different kinds of people. Some were criminals, some were innocent civilians. Not so many cops, less than expected, I think. However, there were two suited up guys who got my attention. One was kind of chubby and had long blonde hair caressing his shoulders. The other one had short brown hair, a little bit of stubble, and a pair of blood-tinted sunglasses. Who wears sunglasses inside a building, you would ask. Well, if the cane he was holding is anything to go by, you have your answer. The guy was blind; although, he could see. I don’t know how to explain it, but he could, I noticed it.

As I, and the cops who were dragging me along, passed by those two guys, the blind one turned to ‘look’ at me. I know, okay? I’m well aware that the man couldn’t actually see, but I swear that it felt like he did. It creeped me out at first, but later I understood that it wasn’t a bad thing at all.

And that, my dear friend who’s bearing my story, brings us to the present. To this very moment, the one I find myself stuck in. I’m currently in the interrogation room of the police station, sitting across the two fellows I saw when I first came in. As it turns out, they’re lawyers; lucky me. The police officers already called my mom and she’s on her way here. She’s going to scold the hell out of
me, how fun. And that’s only if I’m let out with nothing more than a warning from the cops, which seems likely thanks to the two gentlemen in front of me.

The blind guy, Mr. Murdock, told me that as soon as they saw me enter the station, they decided to take my “case”. Apparently, he has a soft spot for troubled kids like me. I’m not that much of a trouble, though. He seems pretty sweet and nice; his partner too, but he gave me the impression of being more interested in money than my wellbeing. No surprise there, they’re lawyers after all. Not the big firm kind of, since they’re here with me. I could never afford something like that, and they know it.

Thing is, I told them what happened and they said that it will be easy to get me out. Which is logical, I didn’t do anything wrong; I was only trying to help, like always when it comes to people like me. Changing the subject, and realizing that after this is unlikely I’ll see them sometime again (unless I get arrested a second time), I take my damn time looking at Mr. Murdock. I’m conscious of the fact that Mr. Nelson, his partner, can form a good idea of what I’m doing. Honestly? I don’t give a shit. I like him, the blind guy with the red sunglasses, he’s cute and handsome. I wish to see him again someday, I hope to.

While my mind tries to memorize Mr. Murdock’s beautiful face, my mom comes bursting through the door, starts yelling at me for being reckless and apologizes to the attorneys. Great. Thanks, mom; for humiliating me and crushing my chance of getting it on with Mr. Blind Guy. Shut up, let me have my fantasies, I deserve them after all the things that I’ve been through today, and all my life for that matter.

Before I can even begin to say 'goodbye' and 'thank you', to Mr. Nelson and Mr. Murdock, my dear mother drags me out from the little room to the expanse of the streets. It’s already dark and it’s fucking freezing. I can see the chilly air every time I exhale and a puff comes out of my mouth. Damn, I should get arrested more often.

Chapter End Notes

I know it’s vague and doesn’t say much, but I thought that as a first chapter it would serve its purpose. Let me know (if you want) what you think about it. Thanks for reading! :D
"This is not taking over my life, okay?
.
.
.
Maybe it does. Shut up. He's hot."

I hope the "protagonist speaks directly to reader" insert it's not too freaky. It's just a dynamic I like. This chapter follows Mackenzie* around the city while she follows Daredevil.

*That's her name. Sorry you had to find this way, I didn't have the opportunity to pop it up in the story yet. As always, bear with me. This is a work in progress after all.

“Nelson and Murdock: Attorneys at law.” That’s what the sign outside the small building read. It seems that someone heard my wish and decided to make it come true. Ironically, said someone is my mother. And she didn’t hear me, by the way; she just deemed it appropriate to thank the lawyers in a more proper way. I can think of a better way but only with one of them, if you know what I mean… Moving on, we’re sitting in their meeting room, almost too small to fit the five of us. Yeah, they have a secretary. I really hope she’s with ‘chubby guy’ at large; otherwise, my dream will crumble down faster than you can say ‘crap’. Just how I’m feeling right now, don’t judge if you don’t know.

My mom (the sweet angel that she is, no sarcasm intended here), made a casserole to thank the guys for helping me out. We’re not in the best economic position, so she couldn’t buy something fancy –let alone pay them. The three of them smile happily anyway and thank her warmly. What I would do to see that smile on his face every day...I’m not even certain myself. He’s just so, so… dreamy. Fuck, I’m falling for a man who must be like ten years older than me or something. I’m pretty well damned.

Anyhow, they’re really nice. They say that they’re happy to be able to help and that they’ll do it again if the “opportunity” presents itself in the future; such charming and lovable guys. Still, there’s something that’s been bothering me since I met them back at the station. Something’s off about Matthew. That’s Mr. Murdock’s first name. His partner is Franklin (or Foggy, as he calls himself). And the woman is Karen Page. What I gathered from their little introduction is that they’re defense attorneys and that this is their job, aiding people like me through the legal system. Nice, I guess.
We don’t stay much longer, unfortunately. I want to keep looking at that lovely face with the glasses and the stubble, but we got to go. If we stay out longer than we should, there will be consequences. The kind I don’t like.

My father passed away ten years ago when I was eight. He was a police officer, killed while on duty by a low scum drug dealer. Some time ago, a couple of years, my mother re-married, after dueling as much as she could. I understand that she needed to move on; to be happy again. What I don’t understand, and never will, is why she married a cheating and violent asshole. Seriously, the guy (despite being a compulsive and misogynistic cheater) gets jealous so easily and quickly that if my mom stays out too long, he’ll beat her when she comes home. I tried once to stop him, and give him what he deserves, it didn’t end up well. Wish the masked man will help on this one too since police can’t –or refuse– to step in. I’m getting too wishful as of late.

Sorry, where was I? Oh yes, the dickhead who likes to beat my mom for no reason whatsoever. Like I was saying, if we get home before he leaves his workplace, we’ll be fine. Or at least she will. Since the day that I fought against him (even having lost) he didn’t try to hurt me again, knowing that I’ll put up a fight if he does and being smarter than that. It’s not like I would win, but I’m capable of messing him up pretty good.

God answered my prayers of meeting Matthew “Hunk” Murdock one more time, but he didn’t listen when I asked to get home before the shit-ass motherfucker. Forgive me for swearing this much, but I really hate that piece-of-shit-excite-of-a-man that calls himself my stepfather. By the time we arrived, he was already there, waiting. He was drunk, as per usual. My mom told me to go to my room and lock myself in. I wanted to stay, to fight and to defend her, she didn’t. As soon as I heard the click that the lock of my door did when I turned it, the screams and the crashes came in waves. Feeling completely impotent, I lie down in my tiny bed and begin to cry.

I hate to be indifferent to it, but I’ve to force myself. Otherwise, it’ll be worse for the both of us; I know because it already happened. So, instead, I grab my cell phone and headphones and listen to music while I try my hardest to think of something other than the fight ensuing outside my bedroom. I don’t hate my life, I hate the fact that I can’t do something to fix it without hurting the only person I care about in the process.

As the song plays, loud and clear, it drowns out every single other noise that there is. It calms me down, just the tiniest bit. There’s only one thing that helps me cope with all of this and that can distract me from the cruel world: him. And no, I’m not talking about Matt “Dreamy” Murdock, sexy attorney at law. I’m referring to Daredevil, the masked vigilante who wants to save the city. I hope he does, eventually. Right now, all he can do is save me. Well, thinking about him can help me forget to some extent what my mom is going through as of this very moment (again, I want to help, but it’ll get nastier if I do).

The more I think (or dream…) about the Devil of Hell’s Kitchen, the more I discover about him. They’re just conjectures, but it’s interesting and entertaining to analyze them. I find myself, most often than not, looking at strangers on the street, trying to figure out if any of them is Daredevil. I’ve come out empty handed each time. I’ll keep trying though, I’ll never give up.

This far I’ve only been able to decipher some details, bits and odds, nothing much. He’s really fitted and strong so that rules out a whole bunch of dudes who are not. He’s of average height, shorter than you’ll assume. He doesn’t seem to shave that much, always wearing a stubble on his face. That’s a bit of info that I gathered from different people who crossed paths with him. Some of them even had the chance to hear his voice, and they told me that it’s not very low or too high, somewhere in the middle I suppose.
Besides the incredibly toned body and amazing combat skills, there’s one thing that keeps poking at my mind: his mask. I couldn’t appreciate the new one at the moment we met, but a lot of people who I talked with told me about the old one. A piece of black cloth tied around half of his head, covering from the nose all the way up. It only left skin exposed from the tip of his nose to the conjunction between his neck and chest. There were no holes of any kind in the mask, at the altitude of the eyes. Someone who got pretty close to the Devil told me that the cloth wasn’t see-through. So, how did he see while wearing the mask? A couple of persons who I spoke to, ones that saw him fight, said that he seemed to see more than a normal person could. How could he do that if the mask apparently prevented him from doing so? If he couldn’t see, then he used his other senses, especially his hearing. But he would’ve to train for years to be able to enhance his senses that much. Sounds crazy, right? Well, I have an idea that sounds insane and makes sense at the same time. Bear with me a little more, please.

What kind of person has enhanced senses without having to train them just for the sake of it? We’re talking about all the senses except sight. Got an idea? No? Let me help then: blind people. Be it born blind or turned blind for X reason, blind people have enhanced senses. Just like Daredevil, according to my theory and what people who encountered him say. So, what if the masked hero was blind? Yes, I hear your argument about being blind not turning you automatically into a superhero, but stranger things have been known to happen. Remember the “incident” in New York some time ago, with the heroes and the aliens? Yeah, me too. Back to my point, I believe he's blind and that his ”superpowers” are enhanced senses. It’s enough to fight crime, in my opinion. There’s that ‘justice is blind’ thing and all.

Moving forward, if Daredevil is, in fact, blind, that leaves us with a little percentage of people who could be him. You’re going to think I’m crazy for saying this (in case you already aren’t), but coming to realize, I’m starting to think that Mr. Murdock isn’t a regular lawyer. Don’t you dare roll your eyes at me! Think about it, it makes sense! He’s him! His complexity matches; he’s a defense attorney, so there’s all that justice crap, and he’s blind! If you still don’t believe me, I can assure you that the two times I met Matt Murdock he talked in a way that made the connection obvious to whoever was paying attention. I was. He sounded so much like Daredevil. Fine, I’m still half in doubt, but if I could meet the vigilante once more and get him to say something, then I could compare voices and be a little surer about my guess. There’s only one way that I can achieve this, I need to get out on the streets and find him.

I take off my headphones and discover the apartment is deadly quiet save for the drowned out chatting on the television. All I need is some black clothes and to get out without being heard. Luckily, I have the clothes and I know how to sneak out quietly. After dressing up, I get out using my window (which is on the fourth floor, but thanks to whoever invented stairs, I can reach the rooftop without falling). A couple of minutes later I’m on the roof, watching the few buildings and houses that surround my apartment. How the hell do I get a hold of Daredevil? I’ve no idea. Guess I should start searching randomly until I get lucky and find something worth the search.

It’s in moments like this that I’m thankful for adding parkour to my training. If I hadn’t, running through the top of buildings would be a hell of a lot more difficult. Got to admit, the wind on my face and hair feels pretty good. Let’s hope I don’t trip and fall down a five-story building, shall we?

I’m going down a ladder in a building near a warehouse when I hear loud banging: gunshots. This might be my opportunity, or something ridiculously stupid; probably both. Crouching down and peering over some barrels piled in the perimeter of the abandoned factory, I stand still and wait for anyone to come out. It’s not long until someone does. A man in a black and red suit: Daredevil. He looks tired and wounded, but not mortally so. I watch mesmerized by how awesome he looks even in his current state. A fleeting thought passes my mind, one of coming close and talking to him. Before I can even ponder on it, the masked man turns his head in my direction, like he just heard me
or something. Is he looking straight at me? Did he really notice me, from that far? No way…

I don’t have time to keep asking myself these questions any longer. He’s moving, and so am I. Damn, he’s way faster than I thought. I’m not sure I can keep up with his pace. God, I’m tired. Wait, where did he go? He was right in front of me a couple of seconds ago…

I stop, stand still with my back straight, and absorb as much information as I can. Trying to mimic him, am I not? The air smells like the smoke coming out of various chimneys around me. The humidity is high tonight; I can feel it on my skin and taste it on the tip of my tongue. This is not helping. Fuck. I give up for now. I’ll keep looking until I find him again. I’ll use this as a way of training. I have to become faster, so I can follow him, and stronger, in case any obstacles present themselves. Who knows? Maybe if I become good enough he’ll let me be his sidekick. Just kidding, stop being so mean.

When I get back home it’s almost dawn, and I didn’t sleep at all. Shit. I’m so fucking tired. What’s worst of all? My body is sore all over and I’ve to get up soon to go to school. Fuck my life.

A week has passed since I followed him for the first time. Unbelievably, I managed to encounter him three more times during these last days. I couldn’t keep with him until the end, but I’m getting closer. The exercise and training are working. Soon I’ll be able to catch him or follow him to wherever he goes. You know what’s the creepy part? No, I’m not talking about the fact that I stalk him. The disturbing bit is that I think he knows that I’m watching him, but it doesn’t seem like he’s going to do something about it. Maybe it’s just my imagination, like always; wouldn’t be the first time.

In other news (more important), one of those days, I came back home only to find my mom unconscious after being beaten half to death by that bastard. I took her to the hospital and reconsidered going out every night. Then again, maybe I can ask Daredevil to do me the favor of beating the son of a bitch that is my stepfather. Still, I don’t think he’ll have enough of a free agenda to do it, or that I’ll have the courage to ask. I’m a coward, I know. Probably should get my shit together and beat him myself.

Do you want to know what the worst part is? I complain about my mother’s situation, I don’t do anything to solve it and on top of it all I’m not even in the house as much as I should. Not only do I go out at night to follow Daredevil, now I’m so obsessed with this that I’m stalking Murdock during the day. While I’m trying to solve a mystery without relevance (because even if I find out who Daredevil is I’m not going to tell anyone), my mom gets beaten in my absence. I’m as much of a piece of shit as her husband is. And I hate myself more than ever because of that. It’s my entire fault, I know. My only semblance of hope is that if my suspicions are true, then I could convince him or blackmail him into bringing the douche to justice. I wish it could work that way.

It’s my second week following him; so far I’ve got nothing. Every night I’m capable of running a little farther, but it’s not enough. I’m getting faster, I acknowledge that, but it’s really tiresome. Last night I almost fell through the gap between two buildings, I could’ve died. I grabbed hold of a ladder before I could fall all the way down, that saved my life. I need to be more careful, otherwise, I won’t live to see if my efforts pay off.

Tonight I’m in an alley, just like the first time I saw him. I’m standing next to an idiot who tried to rob me. If he knew better, he wouldn’t be lying on the floor knocked out cold. I haven’t seen him
yet, the Devil. I suppose I should stay low for a while, I don’t want him to notice me and confront me. I’ve no idea what his reaction would be, and I don’t want to know either. I’m fine being an unnoticed stalker.

I’m about to leave when I hear sounds coming from the rooftop above me; then, out of nowhere, a stick comes flying down, almost knocking me out too. It falls with a clang, bounces a little, and lies still on the pavement. I take a closer look and notice that it’s red and silver, made out of metal. I pick it up at the same time that I hear a noise from above. I look up and see him looking down at me. Well, crap. For a second I think he’ll come down to retrieve what I assume is his weapon—or part of it—but he's grabbed from behind and the fight reassumes. I take it as my cue to leave and go back home. Gripped tightly in my right hand, sits the metallic stick belonging to Daredevil.

I’ve been following Matt “Hottie” Murdock all day (I really need to stop with the nicknames; they sound creepy even to me). He doesn’t do much actually; it’s pretty boring to follow him. I prefer to follow his masked alter ego. I know he is him, okay? He has to. Right now he’s walking home, after finishing his day at the office. Yes, I know where he lives. Yes, I’m aware I’m a freaking stalker. Now shut up and let me keep telling my story. When Matty (I know how it sounds, leave me be) gets home, I get on top of a building near his and watch via binoculars. Stop calling me ‘creep’, please, it’s annoying.

He cooks, investigates about the case he’s on at the moment and then goes to sleep. That’s his routine, pretty normal, huh? This is when I leave and go after Daredevil. If you’re wondering about my mother I’ll tell you this, she’s in the hospital. He put her there, that… I don’t even have words to describe how much of a scumbag he really is so I’ll leave it to you to find them for me. It’s my fault, of course. He got angry because I wasn’t around anymore, so he took it out on her. Now I have to visit a goddamn hospital if I want to see her. No, he doesn’t go. He doesn’t give a shit, just like I don’t for him. I’ll get Daredevil to kick his ass if I can’t do it myself, I promise.

I could try to make Nelson and Murdock press legal charges, but that’s not enough. My mom gets put in the hospital and what, the perpetrator is only sent to jail? ¡Hell no! He’ll pay, with interests.

Doing my best not to lose my calm, I concentrate on the man some feet in front of me. There’re times when I believe that he notices me too, but I’m not one hundred percent sure. All of this is consuming my time, my energy and my mind. If I don’t end up dead, I’ll sure as hell end up demented. If only I could prove or disprove my theory for once and for all, I’ll be much more at ease. Come on, Daredevil/Murdock, reveal yourself to me. I really, really need you to; for me, for my mom.

Chapter End Notes

A lot going on in this chapter, or at least in Mackenzie’s mind. It'll get more "characters dynamics" in the next ones, I promise.

And as always, thank you for your patience, and for reading of course. Let me know
what you think and if you found any error. <3
Thank you and forgive me (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

"Is it too soon to think about buying engagement rings?

Geez, calm your tits, it's just a random question...(it's really not)."

Chapter Notes

As promised, in this chapter we get more interaction between the two protagonists, as well as the true identity of the vigilante finally revealed (to Mackenzie, of course). Hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It's been a month since the last time that I saw him and I still got nothing solid. More so, I'd broken a few of my ribs when I fell off a ladder and into a dumpster. I was lucky there even was one in the first place, it would've been much worse if I fell to the ground instead. Although I'm still alive, I spent a lot of time in bed and I couldn't go out to look for Daredevil. I've missed him during this time. But now I'm back on the streets baby! Yes, I can hear how I sound.

Moving past that, I have exciting news to tell you! I've been ‘secretly’ working for Nelson and Murdock. Well, actually only for Nelson, Matthew doesn’t know and it will be better if it stays that way. With the excuse that we shouldn’t tell him because he wouldn’t agree to let me help them, I convinced Foggy and Karen to keep their mouths shut; so far so good. It’s not like I do much anyway, only some field work that doesn’t represent any real danger. I gather information for them, from harmless people of course. I keep watch in certain places, which works well since no one would really suspect a teenage girl. And at the end of the day, I report back to either of them while Murdock isn’t around. Pretty good strategy, am I right?

This is great, seriously. And I’m not saying it only because I’m able to be around the lawyers, I’m talking about helping other people out, even if it’s in a small way. I don’t bring much to the table, but whatever something I can collect is enough for the three of us. I always want to do more, but at the same time, I don’t want to screw things up. For now, Matt is oblivious to my involvement, or at least that’s what we think. Not only will be compromised my relationship with Foggy and Karen but my plan as a whole. I’m getting closer to finding out, I know for sure. I just need a little more time, that’s all.

I’m still recovering from the fractures, so I can’t keep up with the masked devil. Soon I’ll be able to do so once again.

Tonight’s not the night, unfortunately. I’m tired and hurting all over. I need to get some sleep too. Not everything is bad, though; the temperature is warmer than previous nights, so I’m not freezing my ass off. I’ve been following Daredevil for three hours through half of the city. Does he ever stop?
Doesn’t he get tired after all of this? He must be superhuman or something. That’s not normal.

He went inside a warehouse (yes, Hell’s Kitchen seems to be full of them) over half an hour ago. For a moment I thought about lying down a bit and getting some rest, but it’s never safe to do that in this kind of place. I could wake up dead. Wait, that’s not how it works…it doesn’t matter, you get my point. Whatever is happening inside that building must be pretty bad; otherwise, he wouldn’t take so long in coming back out. I’ve got a bad feeling about this (let me quote Star Wars to my heart’s content, thank you very much).

Tired of waiting, and almost bored to death, I decide to take a closer look at what’s going on. Coming down the rooftop in which I was waiting, I walk silently to one of the big windows and peer inside. There are bodies scattered all over the floor. Damn, it looks like a horror movie. Where is him anyway? I hear loud banging going off somewhere to my right, armed guys most likely. Shit, if they see me…

Something touches my right shoulder, or grabs it, to be more specific. I turn around and a fist collides with my face. Ouch, that hurt. I fall to the ground, grabbing my face and noticing my nose is bleeding. My lower lip is broken and I can taste more blood in my mouth; not again… I look up and find a guy with a scruffy appearance staring back at me. He has a gun. I’m fucked. The noises behind us get louder, distracting him for a second. That’s all I need to get up on my feet and try to knock him down.

My sudden movements startle him, but as soon as he recovers he’s overpowering me. I manage to hit him in the face once and a couple of times in the gut, but it’s not enough. He throws me to the ground with a right hook, hitting me square in the jaw. Lying on the cold concrete I try to cover myself from the vicious kicks aimed at my head. I can feel my half-healed ribs breaking once more, and a trickle of blood running down my left cheek. I get a hold of his right ankle in an attempt to prevent him from hurting me more. Instead, he steps forcefully over my hand and snaps a finger out of place in the process. I cry out from the pain, half-conscious at this point, trying to see if I can get the attention of the masked man.

In place of someone coming to help me, I hear the cock of a gun. I open my eyes and see the guy pointing his pistol at me. Before I can scream, he fires. The sound is deafening and I immediately feel a searing pain in my left side. I fucked up big time.

I can’t hear my own screams, still deaf from the explosion of the gun. All I can care about is the bullet inside me, burning me and tearing me apart. I’ve no idea what’s going on right now, but something definitely is. Otherwise, I would be dead already, with a second bullet coming through my head. I can feel movement around me, something shifting. I think someone fell to the ground, hopefully, the guy who shot me. Without opening my eyes, not daring to, I sense a person close to me. Two gloved hands are touching me, pulling me from the ground. Someone scoops me up in their arms, big and strong. Maybe it’s him, or maybe not. I’m too tired to look and even if I did, I feel like I wouldn’t see anything more than a black void.

The buzzing in my ears is beginning to quiet down, I can hear a little more now. Whoever is carrying me started to move towards a destination unknown to me, or maybe it's not, but I can’t see and I’m feeling more tired and sleepy as time goes by. I try to stay awake, knowing that if I fall asleep I might never wake up, but the pull of the darkness is so tempting…

“Stay with me…”
“Stay with me”. That’s the last thing I heard. Who said it? I don’t know. My best guess is that it was Daredevil, but I wasn’t really conscious at the time. I woke up in the hospital, with my mom asleep sitting next to me. I caressed her hair and smiled sadly. All the shit that I pull her through…It’s not healthy, for neither of us. I love her and I want to protect her, but I can’t do it myself. That’s the reason why I’m looking to make a deal with the Devil (pun intended). I know what you might be thinking right now, that meeting him won’t ensure that he’ll help me. I still have to try. The police officers are too lazy to even care about this situation. He’s my only hope.

This incident won’t stop me from going out each night once I recover. What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger, right? Besides, I got to thank him for saving my life. Before I do that, I have to go back to work. You know; the work I do for Foggy and Karen. They came to visit me the day after I woke up; they even bought me one of those “get better soon” balloons. Karen asked me what had happened and who’d done it. I’d to lie of course, at least in some parts of the story. I couldn’t tell them the whole truth. I gave a distorted version of the events, saying that I was taking a walk when an armed man tried to mug me. I resisted and then he shot me. That last part is not really a lie. But the result was the same, my mom wanted to kill me for doing something so stupid and dangerous, and Karen and Foggy offered their help saying that they would try to catch the criminal. Well, good luck, I think a certain masked someone already took care of it himself.

Tomorrow I’ll be discharged from the hospital. Finally! Jesus, being here is worse than death (not that I really know about that). It’s fucking boring and I can’t do anything at all, just lie down and watch crappy television. Right now, my mom, it’s in the waiting room, getting a coffee or something. She’s a true saint; staying by my side even after all I did to her and the repercussions this whole mess will have. I don’t care if I die; I won’t let him hurt her because of me, not this time.

There’s a soft knock on the door. It’s not my mom since she would come in without knocking. And it isn’t any of the nurses or doctors that I know. Some of them don’t knock, and the rest do it louder. So, who the hell is it? I grant permission to enter to whoever is on the other side, wincing when I hear my coarse voice cracking while trying to speak up. The door opens slowly, revealing a man in a suit, wearing sunglasses and holding a cane. Holy shit, it’s Murdock! I can’t believe my eyes. Oh divine grace, thank you so much for this beautiful gift. Shut up and let me enjoy this, okay? I deserve it, I almost died (I can hear you saying that it was my own fault, I just don’t care).

He prods the floor around him with his cane, searching for any obstacles in his path. He’s so adorable. God, I’m too in shock to even say something. Help me out! Please, what can I say? Oh wait, shut it, he’s speaking.

“Hi, Mackenzie, how are you holding up?” His smile is definitely one of the most beautiful things that I’d ever seen in my life, apart from him as a whole of course. He’s so sweet and lovely, makes me want to hug him and never let go. Wish I could, though. I can’t believe that he came to visit me! Oh my god, I’m going to die. Wait, no, no, no. Not dying until he leaves. I realize I’ve been staring at him with a dumb smile on my face, not responding, for at least a minute now. Maybe he thinks that I fell asleep and he’ll leave. No! I know he can’t see me smile and all that, or maybe he can…if he is Daredevil. But that’s not the point right now. Okay, okay, I need to calm down. And more importantly, I have to say something, now.

“So,” he said. “I can just walk in?” I mean Mr. Murdock. Sorry”. I’m a stupid fuck, such a creep. He’ll figure out that I’m stalking him before I can even make an excuse. He smiles, kind of shyly, and laughs a little. I think my heart just melted. I’m pretty sure my mind did. Help.

“Hi,” he said. “It’s okay, just call me Matt”. Oh hell yes I will! And I’ll especially do it now that you granted me
permission to use it. Damn, I would love to just scream it in b- “So, how have you been doing? Aside from being assaulted and shot, of course”. The cheeky grin, the joke on point, and the melodious voice are killing me. Come on, Matty, I almost died; I don’t want to be on the brink of death again. Why the fuck does he have to be so…Ugh. Fuck it, I give up.

“Well, I’m not dead, so that’s good I guess”. He laughs, he freaking laughs. I’m going to have a heart attack sooner or later. I hope I don’t, though. I don’t want to erase that charming smile off of his face. He looks at me with such a warm expression (stop saying “he’s blind, he can’t see”; blind people can see more than you or I can), not with pity but with true sympathy. He’s worried, I can tell. “What brings you here anyway?”

“Karen told me about what happened, so I came to check on you. I wanted to know how you were”. Sheer willpower is the only thing stopping me from tearing all these damn cables off of me and jumping him so I can kiss him. I wonder what he’ll think about that.

“Oh, really? She came with Foggy a few days back. They even bought me a balloon”. I try to sweat it out. Besides the two first times that I encountered the lawyers, Matt isn’t aware of me meeting Foggy and Karen several times more. Seeing someone twice doesn’t make you care enough to go visit them at the hospital, at least not generally. Murdock’s not stupid; he can realize all of this pretty easily. He found out somehow that they came to visit me, either because they made the mistake of telling him (by not realizing it or simply fucking up) or because he discovered it in some other way. What I’m sure of it’s the reason why he came. He’s here not only because he cares but to find out about my extended involvement with his colleagues. Like I said, a blind person can ‘see’ more than one who has sight.

“So they've told me. They were worried about you, as well as I. They said that you were mugged late at night in an alley. Would you mind telling me what you were doing there at that hour?” There it is; that goddamn question. I knew it; I told you. Might as well take advantage of this opportunity and make him aware of my family’s situation. Maybe Murdock won’t do anything, but if he’s Daredevil, he might do something while wearing the mask.

“I know, it’s silly and dangerous, but it helps me out a lot. My mom and I, we don’t have the most comfortable and happy family relationship. Well, not with my stepfather, that’s what I mean. I like to take a walk, at night when he sleeps, to clear my head a little. It’s just…complicated. I’m sorry; I don’t want to trouble you with this”.

The sad tone of my voice it’s not faked, just a bit exaggerated. It appears to work, though. He looks at me with his brow furrowed and his lips pulled back to a thin line. Gotcha.

“What’s the situation with your stepfather? Does he mistreat you and your mother in some way…” He sounds genuinely concerned; so sweet. His hands tightened their grip on top of the cane and I can see the telltale of an angry twitch on his jaw. He’s getting mad. It’s working.

“Nothing the police can solve, apparently. I’m fine, really, it’s my mom who…” I let a little sob escape my mouth, just for the sake of the effect. I care, okay? I’m seething with rage, so don’t tell me off about my acting. I can’t do anything, but he can.

“You think that there’s nothing the legal system can do about it?” He sounds as pissed as I feel. Matt is trying so hard to not let it show, to not scare me off. Fuck, he’ll be my downfall. You’re right, but I think he’s worth it.

“If there was then I would’ve done something a long time ago. Believe me, I tried; it didn’t work. I thought that maybe…” I don’t finish the sentence in an attempt to hook him up. I could be completely wrong, but if he’s the vigilante that saved me twice, then the insinuation will work
perfectly. I look at him, gazing at his beautiful features, and a couple of lonely tears slid down my face. I cry for my mother and the possible death that awaits her at the hands of that wicked man. And I cry for him too, giving his life for strangers such as myself. I wish the world was a better place.

“What is it, Mackenzie? What you thought of?” He looks conflicted, shifting a little closer and inclining his head to hear me more clearly. His glasses have slipped forward, providing me with a brief view of his eyes. They look like a light shade of brown but mixed with something else. I can’t see too well from this distance, and if I lean in he’ll notice. Not the best course of action.

“Maybe Daredevil could…” His body stiffens and he goes entirely rigid for a second. His expression is unreadable. I don’t know if it's because of me mentioning the vigilante, or because my mom just entered the room. He turns around and greets my mother. She’s happy to see him. Who wouldn’t, honestly?

Our chat is over; the moment to make an indirect request has passed. Now he’s talking with my mom, assuring her that Foggy and he will do as much as they can to help us catch the assailant. I get the impression that he only says so to make her feel better. But then again, I know the truth of what happened to the guy.

He doesn’t stay much longer. He tells me he expects that I recover soon and that I don’t go through something like this again. After an “until next time” (that depends, though), he leaves with his compelling smile, the one that makes you fall for him. Goddamn it.

“Well, I’m glad that you stayed with us, Mackenzie…” His goodbye is more extensive, but it’s drowned out. All I can think about is what he just said; what I just heard.

‘Stay with me’ is what the man in the mask told me when he rescued me.

‘Stay with us’ is what Matthew just said. I’m not fucking kidding you, they sound the same. I swear! It’s the same voice, the same tone; it’s exactly the same.

Daredevil didn’t beat the crap out of my stepfather, at least not yet. I’m still waiting, even knowing it's unlikely. The good part is that I’m already fully recovered. Back on the streets, just like I promised (I know you secretly love me and my foolishness). I resumed my stalking on both, Matt Murdock and Daredevil, but I’m taking a vacation from my work with K&F (yes, I call them that. YES, I ship ’em). Not per my decision, of course. They thought I should keep a low profile for a while and stay out of that line of work. I think is total bullshit. They probably believe I got attacked while investigating for them and I didn’t want to tell them that so they didn’t felt guilty. I was investigating for myself, not for them, about my favorite subject.

So here I am, on the rooftop in front of Murdock’s building, waiting for him to come out as Daredevil. I swear, if he does, I’ll freak out. You have no idea how I’m feeling right now. After all the things I’ve been through I’m finally on the verge of finding out if Matthew Murdock is Daredevil. I’m so excited I might piss myself. I know, disgusting right?

So far nothing has happened. The lights are turned off (then again I don’t think he uses them that much) and the room is deadly quiet. Come on, Matty, I’m sick of waiting. Reveal yourself, for Christ’s sake!

After staying put for nearly an hour, I see some movement in the rooftop across from mine. A
figure, a black silhouette, runs from the door which grants access to the top of the building and begins climbing the neighbor one. I grab my binoculars as fast as I can and focus them on the man parkouring his way through the roofs. I only get a glimpse, but I see black and red. It's Daredevil. Okay, your point of 'it could be anyone from that building, not necessarily Matt' is valid, but mine about 'he’s the hero' is as well. Someone in that apartment complex is Daredevil, period. Now I just have to find who.

I've been watching this building for approximately two months, from above rooftops and from the ground, and I know to a certain extent the people who live there. There’s only one person who matches the description. Yes, you guessed it, Murdock; equally fit and righteous. If I can catch him in the midst of it, then I’ll know for sure. How am I supposed to do that? Got any ideas? Right, thanks anyway.

Oh, I know! It's an excellent –probably not– idea. I’ll search for him...in his apartment. Let me rephrase that so you’ll understand: I’ll go inside Murdock’s place. If he’s there then he isn’t Daredevil; if he isn’t home, then I’ll wait until he shows up. Depending on how he’s dressed like, I’ll confirm if he’s the vigilante or not. Quite simple isn’t it? I just have to find out a way to break in without being too loud or too obvious. I should probably try the door on the rooftop, which will more likely be unlocked. You know, because he’s got to come back at some point. Leaving the door locked would only prove to be a problem then.

Once I get down my building and up his, I find said door. I push it open and walk down a flight of stairs as quietly as I can. Every time the old wood beneath my feet creaks in displeasure I have the feeling that he’ll jump out right in front of me, scaring the life out of my body in the process. I overlook the living room and part of the kitchen, all clear. I move through this area, looking in every corner for someone. When I’m finished registering the entirety of the room I go to the next one. It’s the bedroom, I presume. It has a sliding door, so I need to be extremely careful while moving it. Luckily for me, it isn’t closed all the way, leaving just a tiny gap. I put my fingers on the border and curl them around the side, pulling gently. The door moves smoothly a few inches, enough for me to poke my head in. I do so and find myself staring into an empty room. There’s no one here after all. I widen the gap a little more and step inside, looking around and making sure it’s totally empty. Well, Murdock is Daredevil, unless he has a twin brother who’s also blind. It’s a possibility, right?

I come back to the sitting area once again, letting my body fall heavily onto the couch beneath me. I’m exhausted, and I’m not talking about tonight, I’m talking in general. After weeks of following the two (one, if I’m right) guys all day and night I can barely stay awake and walk. I don’t even know how I’m capable of forming a coherent thought; or "speaking" to you, for that matter. But I’m still here, trying my hardest to figure this all out once and for all. It’s worth it, I know. It has to be.

I stay looking at the giant screen outside the apartment, located in a building across the street. I’m not watching anything really; I’m staring off into space, thinking about him while I cradle part of his weapon. Yes, I still have it. I’m waiting for the opportunity to return it to him myself. That’s the reason why I always go out with it, and it also helps with self-defense. I don’t think I’ll be able to fall asleep with so much light coming from that damn screen or the fact that I’m at somebody else’s place. The last thing I want is to be caught sleeping on the couch of a house I broke into. How could I explain it to Mr. Murdock? Maybe he’ll let me pleasure him as a way of apologizing for breaking into his home… (Can it, let me have my naughty fantasies).

He’s out, that’s for sure. Where? I don’t know. He could be kicking some ass down an alley while wearing a black and red costume-armor. Or he could be doing something completely unrelated, like working late at his office or out for a drink with his two coworkers. Who knows? I just have to wait to find out.
Don’t ask me how or when I ended up falling asleep, I’ve no idea. All I know is that some sort of noise just woke me up…the fucking front door! Someone’s coming, I need to hide. I scramble from the couch and duck behind the kitchen counter that separates the later from the living room. The door opens and someone steps inside. I can hear footsteps and something else hitting the floor repeatedly: a cane. A motherfreaking cane! Dude, do you get what this means?! I’m sorry for calling you ‘dude’, I honestly don’t know what gender you are, is the habit I guess. Anyhow…I WAS RIGHT!!! All along, I was right. Oh my god, I knew it, I knew it! If I could I would be dancing right now. You have no idea how happy I am at this very moment. Matthew Murdock IS Daredevil. If you thought it was already obvious, or if you didn’t, let me clear it all out for you: this is Murdock's apartment (and this just got confirmed by the man himself), and the door from which Daredevil went out the building is the same one I used to get inside. Get it now? I'll accept your congratulations, thank you. Although, if the twin theory turns out to be true (as unlikely as it seems), it would explain why I saw the Devil of Hell’s Kitchen exiting the building and Matt Murdock returning to it. When the fuck did he change? Does he really have a twin brother? It’s hard to imagine, at least for me. Does he works as a lawyer too and has like, a dull name? You know, like Mike Murdock or something. How stupid. I hope he’s an only child. Then again, if he's not, there's the possibility of a threesome...

My party comes crashing down when he steps further into his home and stands still right in front of me, facing me. Fuck. Shit, fuck. Fuck. He knows; he sees me. I’m screwed (I wish I was, literally, by him). Not the right moment for this kind of thoughts. He stares down at me and I feel like he’s boring a hole into my skull. This is so awkward.

“Who are you and what are you doing in my house?” His tone is cold as the kiss of death, his stare is serious. If I speak I might dig up my own grave, if I don’t it’ll end up being the same way. My best option right now is to elaborate a strategy that will get me to make him admit what I know. He’ll still be pissed, but a little distracted.

“How did you know I was here? I was completely quiet and still”. I try to cleverly unmask him the best I can. He couldn’t have known I was here without his special abilities, right? He looks taken aback for a moment, either by my insightful question (again, pun intended, I think…) or by recognizing my voice. If it’s the last case (which sure is, even a normal blind can distinguish voices), then it won’t be pretty for me.

“Mackenzie?!” He sounds shocked, perplexed maybe. Kind of horrified if you ask me (I’m aware you didn’t, by the way). He has a mildly exasperated expression on his face, filled with more surprise than irritation. Guess that’s better. “What the hell are you doing in my apartment?” It really isn't. “How did you even know where I live?” Crap.

“Well…” I got nothing, no excuse or lie to tell him and get myself out of this mess.Fuck, I should’ve thought better about all of this before coming here. If I ever had a chance to hook up with him (as depraved as it sounds; stop judging me) is sure gone now, lost in the ether of impossibility. I honestly don’t believe I can make things worse than they are now. Hm, I shouldn’t have said that…

“Have you been stalking me?” Now I’m at the bottom of the shithole. I didn’t only dig my grave; I nailed the coffin shut as well. There’s no coming back from this. There isn’t a case scenario where he still smiles at me with all the joy in the world. Geez, what am I even talking about? Did I really get this corny? Damn that man.

“If I say yes…” He swears and covers his face with his hands before I can finish my sentence.
“Wait! I got a good reason for doing it, I think…”

“Oh, really? Enlighten me then”, he bites back, furious and scandalized. He’s so sexy when he’s mad. Stop. I need to focus on the task at hand, there’s plenty of time to fantasize about whatever I want once this is settled (I don’t think this can be saved, so I don’t know why I’m even bothering anymore). I’m speechless. His inquiry took away my capability to talk, to invent, and misguide. Nothing comes up in my head that I can use to explain to him what I’ve been doing all this time; except for a stupid idea, like always. Let’s suppose for a second that I’m wrong, for any reason whatsoever, and he’s not Daredevil (like for example, that the twin theory is true). If that’s the case, then I’ll be an asshole for doing what I’m about to do. But, if it works, then he’ll have some explaining to do.

He’s staring hard at me, I know despite the red glasses that he’s still wearing, and waiting for me to answer. I grip tightly the metal stick in my hand and I throw it at him. He doesn’t even flinch; he just catches it before it hits his face. Gotcha Matt. You lose, I win.

Matt looks at me in open disbelief, stunned and petrified. He doesn’t know what to say, opening and closing his mouth several times. He looks at the stick now in his hand, like it was some alien object. His surprised expression turns serious again; down to business then.

“I noticed you following me a while back; I should have confronted you then. Not so you couldn’t find out, but so you wouldn’t get hurt. It’s because you were following me that you got shot. It’s my fault…” He’s so conflicted about all of this, I can’t stand it. It’s not his fault, it never was. I chose to do this and to keep doing it even after being almost killed.

“Stop right there. I’m the only one responsible for my decisions and mistakes. It wasn’t like I’d never been hurt before”. And it’s true. I was already battling against death (in the form of bullies) every day. What is a little more? It’s nothing; not really and not at the end. I don’t regret what I did, what I do. I love it and I’m proud of it. I can’t quit now that I’m better at it.

“You’re right; I just never thought that it would end this way. I didn’t expect you to get this far. I should’ve known better”. The tone of his voice sounds disappointed and sad. Why? Is he still feeling guilty? Gosh, what can I do to make him stop? I hate to see him like this. Can I get ‘happy Matt’ back? I like him better.

“I know that this is all screwed up, but I want to thank you. You know, for saving me twice. And I also will like to apologize for breaking in. The door on the rooftop was unlocked”. I smile apologetically but I’m not sure if he can see it or not (we’re talking about Daredevil, it’s obvious that he sees more than he lets on). He smiles too, sadly again. Guess he’s not really happy about it, the part where I was in danger, not the one where he saves me from it. Nevertheless, his mood appears to lighten a little bit. Ten points to Gryffindor! Or ten points to me...? Shut up.

“My pleasure; and it’s my fault for not locking it in the first place. Don’t worry about that, just never do it again unless it’s important. So, now that you know I suppose there's no use in trying to hide it anymore. Why don’t we sit so we can chat more comfortably?” Yes, please. God! The ‘my pleasure’ almost got me melting. Such a charmer he is. And, did he just say that I can come here again? Sweet baby Jesus. He motions to the couches in the middle of the room and leaves his cane over the kitchen counter. Am I going to see Matt Murdock moving without a cane? Hell yeah, he’s a total badass.

He sits on the couch and I take the one positioned in front of him. This is so intimate. Just the two of us, sitting in a dark room, with only the light from the giant screen outside illuminating enough so we’re able to see each other’s faces. Well, actually the light only helps me. He can "see" me in complete darkness. Matt takes his blazer off, leaving it in the backrest of the couch, and loosens his
tie. I’m crossing my fingers so this ends up differently. What? Can’t a girl get laid these days? You’re right; my expectations are way too high, I’m sorry. I’ll just shut up for now and let him speak. “So… are you going to tell me about all this?” I say waving my hand around like he could see me doing it.

“I couldn’t stop you before, and I guess it won’t be a different case now, so let’s start from the beginning”.

Chapter End Notes

Well, well, well, seems like they're getting along pretty well, doesn't it?

To be completely honest, I don't know what I'm doing. I'm just letting myself get carried by my ideas and it's turning out like this. Hope it doesn't suck too much.

Like always, let me know what you think if you'll like. I'll try my best to fix any errors that there might be. Thank you for reading and being patient with me. <3
Tell me who you are

Chapter Summary

"I wonder what feels better: Matt's soft skin or his silk bed sheets...

Maybe I should try both at the same time, to make a comparison and decide. Just saying."

Chapter Notes

I'm soooo sorry for the late update. I hope that the quantity and quality can compensate and are worth the wait. At least things seem to start looking up for our beloved*
protagonist.

*I don't know about you, but I do love her, and I think that's enough for me (not trying to diss anybody, just expressing my feelings). ;)

PD: I wanted to post this on Valentine's Day but finishing it, correcting it and editing it took me way longer than I thought. Sorry, again. :S <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“That’s it.” He told me everything; from the accident that left him blind to this night's fight. As it turns out, there wasn’t a twin brother. He came back while I was sleeping and noticed me on the couch. At first, he didn’t recognize me, but since he considered me to not be a threat, he changed back into his normal clothes and went out the front door only to come back in. It was in part because he thought that if I was there it meant that I knew him somehow. So in order to protect his secret identity, he changed. Seems a bit silly to me, but I understand his reasoning. “Now that I told you my story, would you tell me yours?”

His gaze is fixed on me, his eyes looking downwards. I’m sitting on the armrest at his right side; I’ve moved here after I finished patching him up. As it turns out, during the fight that he endured tonight he got a bunch of wounds and cuts all over his body. Since I was already here, I offered my aid. After all, I’ve been doing the same on myself for a long time now. I’m not perfectly good at it, but the stitches are holding up nicely and he isn’t bleeding all over the place anymore. The first indication I got was from the red spots on his white dress shirt. He thought that he could hide them beneath his jacket, but he took it off.

I freaked out a little when I saw how many wounds he had, but I worked quickly so he wouldn't lose more blood. To be honest with you, my hands trembled a bit, but not because of what I was doing. The cuts were on his arms and torso, back and front. So yeah, you guessed it; I’d the opportunity of seeing and touching his abs (basically all of his upper body). It was heaven. Thank you, God. Anyway, as I stitched him up, he kept his eyes glued to the ceiling. His expression was blank, but I saw the way his jaw was set and his nostrils flared while he tried to bear the pain.
Despite my best intentions, it still hurt. It made me feel guilty about enjoying so much being able to touch him. I didn’t voice my opinion of this particular situation. I know I’m a pervert, but I don’t want him to think that way about me.

Sorry, got carried away for a second. As I was saying, I’m sitting close to him, leaving some comfortable space between us. I don’t want to seem more intrusive (I did break into his house after all) that I already am. Matt is patiently waiting for me to begin telling my story. Guess I should start from the beginning. Here we go. “Since I was little I always loved to read and learn. I spent most of my time reading about different topics and practically anything I could get my tiny hands on. It’s something that my father taught me, amongst other things. Of course, my chosen ‘hobbies’ weren’t appealing to my classmates. I didn’t have many friends while growing up, but I managed nevertheless. The important thing is that I suffered two kinds of treatments because of my preferences. On one hand, I was teased by most of the class, on the other, I was bullied for it. The larger, stronger, and dumber kids wanted a piece of my knowledge; either by having me do their homework or giving them the answer to the tests.”

I pause for a second, feeling a little overwhelmed by what I’m about to say next. He notices my sudden silence and tilts his head in my direction, raising his eyebrows in concern. “My father was a cop, a good one. He taught me about being honest and always doing the right thing. So for me, helping those lazy kids was like helping criminals or something like that.” A chuckle escapes me, bitter and sad. Remembering my father, and the lessons that I learned from him always bring tears to my eyes. “I refused to comply, every time. They didn’t take that too well, so they started to beat me once and again. No matter how many times they did it, no matter how much it hurt, I never gave up. I’m as stubborn as my dad. I wasn’t happy, but at least I didn’t felt filthy for helping them. My parents were super worried and proud at the same time. It was bizarre, to say the least.”

“What happened to your father?” Matt asks quietly, staring up at the ceiling once more. A lonely tear rolls down my cheek and I try to steady my breathing. I miss him so much. He was my best friend, always helping me and teaching me about life. My heart broke when he died, but it was way worse for my mom. She lost her soul mate and her life went downhill from there. Sometimes I think that she married the asshole as a way of punishment. She still blames herself for his death, so I stopped trying to convince her otherwise a long time ago. She never listened to me.

“He was killed ten years ago, by a drug dealer, while he was on duty. He tried to help the scumbag, but he didn’t care about anything else than escaping.” I can’t keep the sadness and rage from my voice. With my hands clenched I take a deep breath, the intent of calming down and re-assuming my story pretty clear. I fail pathetically, having a couple of tears fall down and wet my face in the process. Like he could hear the sound of the falling tears, he turns to face me. His face shows a mixture of sadness and preoccupation. I look at his eyes and think I can see them glass over, but I’m not sure. “The only things that he left behind, that I could keep, are all the things that he taught me and that I learned from him: to be honest, rightful and remain true to myself; most importantly, to never give up or give in. I followed these teachings all my life and I’ll continue to do so. It’s the only way I can really remember him.” Matt looks at me with sympathy and smiles softly with half-lidded eyes. We both feel the same, having a similar story. He knows perfectly how I feel about this. It’s comforting talking to someone who understands.

“He sounds like a good man.” He comments in almost a whisper, curving the corners of his lips just enough to arch his mouth upwards. My father was a good man, a great man indeed. I never met someone better than him, either as a person or as a police officer. I no longer trust any cop. They were already quite corrupted back in the day, but now? I can’t begin to tell you how much. Matt knows this, even more, having fought against them multiple times. Now and then, I suspect about my father’s death not being an accident. But how could I know? Maybe someday I’ll find the truth.
“He was. He inspired me in so many ways, just like you did. That night, when you saved me for the first time, you changed my life. I was used to being abused; I let it happen over and over, lying on the floor and waiting for it to end, every time. But that night, in the alley, everything changed. I realized that it didn’t have to be that way anymore, that I could do something about it. It took me some days to decide to start taking self-defense classes at the local gym, but when I did I felt better. I swore to myself that I would never let that happen to me again. So far, I fulfilled that promise. My mom says, despite the anger and fear, that my father would be proud of me for standing up against those who are stronger than me.” His smile is rewarding; like if he were proud of me too. I wish it was the case, but I’m really not sure. Matt motions with his right hand, telling me to keep talking. “They still were bigger and stronger, but my small body provided more agility and speed. I also learned how to throw some good punches and kicks, giving one hell of a fight before going down. They won the fight, of course, but they’ve never won the battle.”

I feel a bit silly, talking this way like I’m the captain of a cavalry or something of that sort. Laughing at my own thoughts, Matt turns his head curious at the reason that made me start giggling all of the sudden. His look of confusion only manages to make me laugh louder for a second before it dies down. “Fighting for me wasn’t enough, so I started defending other kids who lacked the courage or the skills. After that I kind of became like the teenage Daredevil, fighting against bullies to aid the weak children and teens in need of protection. It’s not much, but as long as I can help, I’ll keep doing it.”

Matt’s smile widens, showing two rows of perfectly shaped white teeth. If all it takes it’s to be beaten while those attacked escape, I don’t mind being hurt. “You really care about those kids, huh?” It sounds like a question, but it’s more of a statement. I nod in response, supposing that he can pick it up as a signal of affirmation. Since he doesn’t ask again, I assume he saw me move my head. “I can’t say that it makes me happy that you put yourself in the line of danger like that, Mackenzie, but I understand. You like to help others, just like me; even Foggy and Karen.” He throws the bomb like it’s no big deal. Damn it, I was hoping that he hadn’t figured that out yet. He stares at me with a smug face, full of disappointment. “Feel like telling me about that?” I can hear that undertone saying ‘you better start talking’. It’s scary and exciting.

“Like you just said, I like to help.” What a poor excuse. Seriously, it’s so lame. He doesn’t buy into it in the least bit. “Okay, fine, it wasn’t only because I wanted to help, it was part of my plan. You know; the one about finding out if you were Daredevil.” He looks at me disapprovingly, clearly upset that it worked out in the end. I think he’s also pissed about the fact that K&F kept this from him. “Sorry, about all of this. I know it was selfish to pursue you like that, but I became so obsessed with finding out, I just…” I lift my eyes from where they were staring at my fidgeting hands and meet his, a pair of dark pools that threaten to swallow me. I’m left speechless, enraptured by his gaze. Dear God in heaven, don’t let me fall any further for this man. Well, too late.

“It’s dangerous, Mackenzie, even if what you do is talk with harmless people and investigate safe places. Someday, one of those persons or one of those places could turn the situation into a nightmare that you can’t get away from. Trust me, I know.” That ‘I know’ sounds so familiar to me. I guess that to you too. I feel like a child being scolded by an adult. It’s kind of like that. At least if we take into account that I act like a kid sometimes. I don’t blame him; if I could I would say the same to him. I hate to see him hurt just as much as he hates seeing me in the same state.

“I know how risky it can be, but so far nothing bad has happened to me because of it. If you’re going to tell me off about something, then let that be the fact that I stalked you almost every night for over a month.” I try to make it sound funny (even knowing that it’s definitely not), but I only get a stern stare in return. His expression darkens considerably and he looks angrier than before. He might not be happy about having let me do that for so long. Maybe I shouldn’t have brought that up…
“Perfect timing, Mackenzie, I was just about to bring that up.” Fuck. Thank God his superpower isn’t being able to kill someone just by looking at them, if it were I would be long dead by now. “I hope you’re smart enough to realize that that’s got to stop. You can’t follow me anymore, neither as Daredevil or as Matt Murdock, understood? This is not a game; you could get seriously hurt or even killed if you continue to do that. I can’t have you die because of me; I would never forgive myself if…” He comes to an abrupt end, not wanting to finish the sentence. I get it, he’s worried. He shouldn’t blame himself or take responsibility for whatever happens to me on my own accord, but I guess it can’t be helped. His eyes are watery again and it’s my fault. Shit, how do I fix this? “You have to promise me, Mackenzie, that you won’t follow me anymore. Please.” He sounds so torn and desperate, almost at the brink of crying, that it makes me reconsider all of this. If I hadn’t been so selfish, if I’d thought about him and the consequences of finding out his secret, then we wouldn’t be in this mess. I became so obsessed with him and his vigilante persona that I didn’t even take a second to think about the repercussions my findings could have.

“Okay, I’ll promise, but with one condition.” He whips his head to the side, looking at me intently. His expression is full of uncertainty and doubtfulness. Matt’s eyes dart out from one side to the other, fleetingly fast. It’s like the REM phase of sleep. He licks his lips, his mouth seeming to dry to let him speak clearly. He’s considering the two options at hand: he either listens to what I have to say or stays firmly put in his stance and doesn’t allow me to divert from his request. I don’t want to make his life any harder that it already is; I just want to make it easier. To help him out with whatever I can, like gathering information or patching him up. As the silence stretches on, I star to believe he won’t let me voice my offer of help.

“What is it?” He says lowly but firmly. He sounds death serious; like he won’t give into any shitty requires that I make. He’s ready to turn me down if it’s necessary. Harsh. His eyes look death, like those of a fish, and his jaw is clenching so hard that I wonder how his teeth are not breaking from the pressure. I peek at his hands and I see them curling tightly, probably digging the nails into the flesh of his palms. If I didn’t know him better I would swear that he’s about to punch me in the face or something. Matt wants to protect me, and at the same time he seems like he’s ready to kill me…I’m not sure if I trust his judgment that much anymore.

“I will not follow you anymore, in this I agree. But no matter what happens, you won’t push me away, okay?” I can feel all of my emotions coming to the surface. Shit, I’m about to cry. I can’t cry in front of him, it would tip me off. He can’t know how I truly feel about him; it would be even a stronger reason for him to pull away from me. I became so tangled with him and all of this that I know that losing him will be worse than death or torture. Yes, I admit it; I’m in love with him, so what? I didn’t choose to, it just sort of happened, and there’s nothing I can do to go back now. It is the way it is. And now that I’m looking at him, with his brows furrowed and staring at the floor even when half facing me, I understand that I fell for him since the night I met him as Daredevil. Please, Matt, I can no longer live without you.

“Okay.” He says reluctantly, like fearing he’ll regret this choice. I hope he doesn’t, and I hope I’m not making a huge mistake by sticking at his side. He seems so vulnerable and fragile right now that I don’t want to touch him in case he’ll break. How much will this decision affect our lives? I don’t know. I’ll just cross my fingers in hope that everything goes smoothly, without shit hitting the fan. Sick of him gazing blankly at the ceiling above him, I scoot closer until I’m sitting right beside him. This startles him at first, but then he lifts his right arm and moves it over the backrest to embrace my shoulders. He squeezes a little and grins charmingly, demonstrating an evident change of mood. I cuddle against him, relishing in the warmth of his body temperature and the smoothness of his skin (despite it being covered with cuts and scars almost everywhere). If someone told me a month ago that we would end up like this, I would’ve laughed in their face disbelievingly. I just can’t believe the familiarity with which he takes me in like this.
We stay in a comfortable silence for a long time, each one busy with our own thoughts. It’s no
doubt our “relationship” (whatever it is) just changed majorly, considering that I know his secret and
he knows…well, that I know. I suck at explanations, sorry. Anyway, I lift my head a little so I can
see his face and try to read what’s going on inside of his mind. I’m unsuccessful at this since his
expression remains unreadable. Still, I wonder if he’s subtly doing the same with me.

“You want to say something.” It’s all the warning that I have. Well, no shit Sherlock. There are a
MILLION things that I want to say…but I can’t say any single one of them. Honestly, what am I
supposed to do? To tell him that I love every single one of his different smiles: the sly one, the happy
one or the shy one? Say that I get tingles all over my body when I see that familiar jaw twitch which
is always a clear sign of his forthcoming wrath? Or maybe he would like to listen about how I melt
every time that he tilts his head just the slightest bit as an indication of listening to
something/someone or trying to understand what someone’s saying/what’s happening around him. I
could go for hours on end about any physical aspect, and even more for all of his personality
characteristics. He’s cute, and sweet, and lovely. His manners and chivalry are impeccable. He’s one
of the nicest persons I’ve known in my entire life, besides one of the hottest and most beautiful. The
list goes on, but the truth is I can’t speak about it to anyone, even less to him. If he finds out, it’s
over. He can’t know that I’m in love with him,

Matt appears to be worried by my extensive silence and stillness. He lowers his head a bit and
searches my eyes with his own. I don’t know what he’s expecting to find. Unsolicited love, maybe?
That’s the one and only reason to cut all ties with me. It makes me feel like a piece of trash, but right
now I’m glad he’s blind. Then again, I’m never sure of how much he can actually see. So let’s
change the subject and don’t give him the opportunity to find out about my love for him. “As we just
established, our ‘friendship’ will continue.” If he notices how I cringe when pronouncing the word,
he doesn’t show it. “In the lights of this agreement, I would like to offer my help.” I stop to see his
reaction. Matt looks mildly confused but he nods in encouragement for me to keep talking. “Taking
in consideration that I already help out Foggy and Karen with information gathering about cases you
guys work in, I thought that maybe Daredevil could use the same help. Nothing extremely
dangerous, though, just talking to some people and looking around some places, that’s all.” I try to
sound convincing, so he sees it as a good idea, but I fail roundly.

His expression hardens and he looks sharply at me, showing every little bit of his disapproval.
“Absolutely not, Mackenzie. The people Daredevil deals with are a thousand times more dangerous
that those you have dealt with while working for Foggy. You’ve no idea what these people are
capable of. They won’t only hurt you; they would torture you and then kill you to get information.
Any person which you could get something significant out of, or any place for that matter, is the
one I take care of. To even think about it as a possibility is absurd.” His disbeliefing tone of voice
hurts a little. I only wanted to help, not to freak him out so much. It’s not like I was going to bluntly
ask a mafia boss about his business and all, I just thought that I could make a bit easier his nighttime
job. Take some responsibilities and worries off of him. He picks up on my dismay and softens
slightly. “I suppose there could be something for you to help me out with, only if I deem the
situation, individuals, and place safe enough for you to be in. This might not happen recurrently or
even at all. You’ll have to be patient.” I smile victoriously and look up at him with big eyes full of
gratefulness. Thank you! I swear I won’t let you down.

“Yes?” Matt nods once and a small smile decorates his features. How can I be graced with such
an amazing human being? “Thank you. I mean it. And it’s not just about this, but about everything
that you’ve done for me; all the way back to that first night in the alley, when you saved me from that
bully and his father. If it weren’t for you Matt, I-I’ll probably wouldn’t be here right now, and I’m
not talking about your house…I just-Thank you.” God, I’m this close to starting to cry like a baby,
and he knows. Thankfully, he just smiles and pulls me closer to him, caressing softly my upper right
arm. Feeling a bit confident, I let my head rest against the backrest, near his shoulder. If I moved
closer, I could put my head on the crook of his neck. Damn, I want to do it so badly.

“You don’t have to thank me, Mackenzie, I’m just glad that you’re okay.” Sitting like this, so close to one another, we stay still and stare at the opposite wall (the one that divides the living room from his bedroom). The sound of the rain pouring heavily lulls us into a state of complete serenity. This feels like Heaven, even by being right next to the Devil. I never want to get up or to let go.

“Now that you refused my help in collecting information for Daredevil, there’s a second way of helping I’ll like to offer you.” He raises an eyebrow inquiringly, looking sideways at me. Geez, Matt, you know how sexy you look with that eyebrow raised? It makes me want to bite your neck… Trying not to blush at my lascivious thoughts, I look away from him and out the window in an attempt to calm my rapid heartbeats. If he notices it, I’m doomed. He could interpret it any way he wanted. “Well, as you witnessed tonight, I’m able to provide medical assistance. You know; in case you don’t have anyone else to call, you can always count on me. No matter what place or time, I’ll be ready to come running. I’m aware that my skills are not perfect, or decent at length, but I’ll still try my best so you don’t…die.” I finish painfully, feeling him wince at the mention of possible death. Let’s be realistic here, I could probably kill him way faster that any criminal just by messing up while I try to close a wound or something. It sucks, but I got nothing else useful to throw on the table. He considers it for a long time. In the meantime, he draws circles on the soft skin of my shoulder with the pad of his index finger. How sweet.

“Alright, I accept your offer,” Matt says finally, turning his head so I can see his reassuring smile plastered on his face. YES! I’ll get the opportunity to touch his well-toned chest. Dayum! Imagine if I could touch him in other places, maybe his…”But only as a last resort. You’re right about your ability at stitching being awful.” I open my mouth and frown in astonishment. How dare he? It’s perfectly okay if I say it, but he has no right, after all the things I did for him…He laughs wholeheartedly, the noise a warm sound that fills me with happiness and ease. “I’m messing with you, I would be grateful even if you just stapled my wounds shut. Never do that, though.” He starts laughing again and is too damn contagious to resist. I end up giggling too, at the ridiculous idea of a cut being closed with staples.

“I’ll only do it if you get cranky like before.” My grin is enormous, concealing how much I like to joke too. Matt looks outraged at my complaint, but he can’t find anything to say in order to defend himself from such accusation. It’s not entirely true, he did grunt and twitch in displeasure while I was doing my best in trying to stitch his wounds shut, but he behaved aside from that. I’m relieved that we’re now joking friendly instead of arguing heatedly. Although, if fiction is right, sometimes heated arguments can lead to…”Before I forget, there’s something I want to ask you.” Matt’s grin disappears, but he looks more curious than upset. Lifting slightly his eyebrows, he waits for me to voice said question. “I was thinking that maybe you could train me. You know, like Stick did with you.”

He looks amusedly surprised, taken aback by my sudden request. “You want me to train you like Stick did with me?” He asks with an incredulous smile decorating his face and each eyebrow shot up. He knows that I don’t actually want that, but he can’t help himself at taking advantage of my wrongly posed question. Always the same Matt Murdock: waiting patiently to show anyone their wrongdoings.

“You know perfectly well that that’s not what I meant. I’m just asking you to teach me a couple of moves and tips so I don’t get my ass so thoroughly kicked. Not looking up to learn the whole ninja thing. With a bit of improvement on my fighting skills, I think it’ll be enough to beat the shit out of those bullies without having the same happen to me. What do you say?” I ask him nervously, a fleeting thought of him saying ‘no’ passing my mind like a shooting star. It went by fast, but I could still register it. If he declines, then I will keep getting my ass handed to me unless I manage to
improve by myself (which seems unlikely, to say the least). “Like I said, I don’t want to be able to kick ass like Daredevil. I’m just interested in saving myself a bit of trouble and pain.” I continue eagerly, trying to get him hooked on the idea. He presses his lips together, staring into space as he thinks, mulling over his decision.

“Fine, I’ll train you in the ancient art of kicking bully ass.” He says it so seriously that I skip a beat before starting to laugh hard enough to make breathing a difficult task. He follows in suit and has to grab his left side with his free hand to try to soothe the pain. As the laughs star to die down and I wipe the happy tears at the corner of my eyes, he sighs contently. His thumb is caressing my arm so lightly that I almost don’t register the action. It’s comforting and calming, his touch and his presence. I wish we could stay like this forever.

“You know; if sometime in the future you think it might be necessary that I learn more about the whole fighting thing, then I’m open to it. Maybe it could turn out helpful for both of us.” He looks uncertain, surely believing it not to be essential or important. I don’t understand why he seems so reluctant to the idea. Is he afraid that the more I’m able to do the further I’ll go when defending the kids from their bullies? Or it’s something else entirely? “What’s wrong, Murdock? Frightened that I might go out full ninja mode on you and be capable of defeating you?” I try my hardest to sound threatening but I fail miserably and we both start laughing raucously. I clench my sides, unable to get air past my throat. Matt’s laugh is mixed with little yelps and groans of pain. It’s painful but we can’t stop. How silly we must look.

“You’re right; I’ll hate to have you go full ninja mode on me, I wouldn’t be able to compete against that.” He laughs some more and I almost follow him, but I don’t have any oxygen in my lungs to spare. Tired and out of breath, I slump down on his right side, resting my head on his shoulder. I can feel him crane his head to the side I’m on, his jaw brushing against the top of my head. He’s probably either looking down at where my body or head would be (from his point of “view”: I don’t know if I can explain myself correctly), or he’s staring out the window at the rain still pouring outside. I’m lucky it didn’t start raining when I was still on the rooftop of the building across the street. Effectively distracting me, he removes his right hand from my arm and uses it to pet my head softly and soothingly. I feel like I can fall asleep any instant.

He’s about to say something but I cut him unintentionally with a yawn. He frowns and tilts his head up, like searching for something. “It’s going to be dawn soon. We should go to sleep already.” His voice sounds serious, so I take it as a cue to leave. I don’t want to keep him awake anymore; I’ve got way more than what I initially came for. I push myself up and away from the couch, looking groggily and unhappily at the storm outside. Shit. When I get home I’ll be soaked to the bone, sporting an awful case of pneumonia in a few hours. Preparing myself for the long journey, I stretch from toes to fingertips. My back cracks nicely and I feel more tired than ever. He gets up a minute later.

“Sure thing, Mr. Murdock. You better get yourself to bed as soon as possible; you’re still injured after all. I’ll walk myself out, so don’t worry about me.” He stops mid-stride towards his bedroom and turns fully to look at me. He’s showing the now frequent seen furrowed brow and stares at me quietly for a moment. Whatever he’s thinking about doesn’t seem nice. “Matt?” The call of his name is effective in bringing him back to reality. His eyebrows furrow more deeply and he opens his mouth halfway. A second passes and he closes it back, looking strangely insecure. I would almost say uncomfortable.

“It’s raining heavily outside, Mackenzie; you’ll definitely catch a cold if you go now under this weather.” He says blinking rapidly. Why is he fidgeting so much? He can’t be that worried about a mere cold, right? “Why don’t you stay here until the rain stops?” He’s frozen in place, looking expectantly at the floor near me. Did he just really ask that? My mouth falls slightly open on its own
accord. Does he really want me to stay in his house until the storm clears out from the sky? I don’t think so. Or at least I don’t believe he’s asking out of something else than plain courtesy.

“It’s fine, Matt, I won’t die from a simple cold. I don’t want to be intrusive or…” I don’t want to be a bother. You’re way kinder than anyone besides my mom; I couldn’t ask this much of you or let you offer it on your own. Besides, the more time I spend with you, the more I think I’m going to lose it. You’ve no idea how dangerous is for you to have me around. If you don’t want me to fall for you and to pursue you, then don’t drag me any closer. Reassure me is okay to sleep here and I won’t walk out of this ever. Tell me to stay and I will love you forever.

“I don’t mind at all, Mackenzie. Actually, I’ll feel better if you stay. This way I’ll know that you didn’t die of pneumonia because of me.” That’s it, I’m way in too deep to leave now. I hope you can handle what you just got yourself into, Murdock. I can assure you it won’t be easy or pleasant (only in case he doesn’t return my feelings now or ever). Don’t tell me I didn’t warn you. Well, I really didn’t warn him, but my argument about leaving should’ve been proof enough. If he didn’t pick all this up with his enhanced senses, then I feel sorry for him (yes, because now he has a crazily obsessed teenage stalker refusing to leave his life).

“If you insist, then I’ll stay. But with one condition.” He lifts his eyebrows more in annoyance than surprise, clearly getting tired of my requests. He still motions with his hand for me to continue speaking, and looks at the ceiling with his dark eyes. Now that we’re both standing, and at a few feet one from the other, I can fully appreciate him in his current state. Aside from the hot pink and dark red wounds that I recently stitched up, he’s stunning. With a body well fitted and a handsome face, he’s what every woman will want in their bed above them. Completely naked and panting…

“What condition?” He asks begrudgingly, already preparing himself for an idle demand. He shouldn’t, actually, what I’m about to say will be in his favor more than mine, honestly. Still, he stares at my warily and waits patiently for me to elaborate.

“I take the couch.” For anyone with my point of view (despite my feelings for him) it would seem obvious that he’ll sleep in his own bed, but I know better than to entrust him such a significant decision. He’s a gentleman and, more importantly, he’s well aware of the screen outside his building despite his blindness. So, in trying to ensure that I sleep comfortably, he’ll take the couch. But I won’t allow it. He’s wounded, surely more tired than I am, and this is his house. Also, I wasn’t even invited, I broke in (and it doesn’t change anything the fact that he let me stay).

“Mackenzie, I…” I hold up a hand and he shuts his mouth instantly. Told you, he can see better and more than I can. He’s scowling but seems to be too tired to argue further. Pointedly ignoring the look I give him when he opens his mouth once again to protest, he turns on his heel (purposely wearing some sort of pout on his face, or at least I presume as much) and disappears behind the sliding door that connects his bedroom with the rest of the apartment. Great, I won. Or that’s what I think until I see him turn back out the other room. I’m about to say something when I see that he’s carrying a blanket. He leaves it in the left armrest of the couch and wishes me a good night of sleep. Before he closes the sliding door, I wish him sweet dreams as well. I think I should tie myself somehow to the couch. Otherwise, I know for sure that I’ll end up curled against the firm and warm body lying on the bed.

The light coming through de uncovered windows wakes me up. I’ve never slept so well in my entire life. Matt’s bed is definitely one of the softest and most comfortable things in this world. The
silk bed sheets and the mattress made of who knows what...they're just to die for, but not as much as the man sleeping on them. Since we're on this subject, I'll admit there's no one cuter looking while asleep than Murdock. He looks so...serene. In his sleep, there are no criminals to fight as Daredevil or defend as Matt Murdock. I wonder what he dreams of. He was able to see until he was nine, so I suppose he can see things when he's dreaming. I'm not sure, maybe I can ask him later. At this very moment, I want to keep enjoying the stillness and tranquility that surrounds us. He's laying on his back, with his head tilted to his right side. His bare chest rises and falls slowly every time that he breathes in and out. Matt's face shows how well he rested, completely calm and relaxed. I need to keep myself in check so I don't trace his prominent jaw line with one of my fingers, feeling the rough stubble and the bone beneath it. After scratching it a little, I would continue my path down his exposed throat and over his hairless and rock hard chest. I'll stop there a second longer, tracing the well-defined muscles including his pectorals and abs. And from there I would go further down to...

“I see that you changed your mind about sleeping on the couch.” His sudden comment startles me. Was he awake all this time? Did he notice me gawking at him? Oh, Jesus, I'm screwed. His eyelids flutter open lazily and he stares at me, or actually to my chin. In the bright light of the day, I get a better look at his eyes color. They’re a moldy shade of green mixed with a chocolaty tone of brown, how utterly beautiful. Matt wets his lips and raises his eyebrows expectantly, waiting patiently for my response. Fuck. He caught me red handed. I was supposed to get up before he woke up, not after. He doesn’t seem pissed, just curious. Maybe a bit put off. You can never know with him, being all unreadable and shit.

“Well, I'm, uh…” So smooth and clever, am I not? As always: do first, think later. If I were to fight real criminals, I wouldn’t die because of the lack of skills, but the lack of planning. He’s still waiting for me to come up with something to say, to explain my actions. Would saying 'I just wanted to sleep with you because I love you’ work? I don’t think so. He’ll probably kick me out of the bed before I can even get away from it. Besides, the position I’m currently in isn’t helping my case. Basically, I’m lying right next to him, so close I can feel him. I have my chest almost pressed flush against his right side. “Felt lonely?” So pathetic it hurts.

“Are you telling me or asking me?” He asks confused, but with an amused tone. Thankfully, he’s taking the whole situation lightly. I don’t want to imagine what he would’ve said if he was displeased about this. How fortunate for me, right? Do not worry my friend; I know you secretly root for us. After a longer-than-normal silence passes, he half smiles and stretches like a cat on top of the bed. Sweet baby Jesus, those muscles contractions are so...

“I'm telling you.” He cracks open one of his recently closed eyes and looks at me smugly, clearly picking up on the strain of my voice. Damn it, Murdock, it’s not fair. You shouldn’t get to appear so ravishingly delicious while in front of me, it makes me want to do things…“I'm sorry, I shouldn't have intruded like this on your bedroom, and even less on your own bed. It was just that...the light coming from outside, from the screen and the lightning bolts, and the constant sound of the rain didn’t let me sleep. I thought that maybe here it would be better. The idea of waking you up to let you know crossed my mind, but at the end, I decided against it because you were so tired that I didn’t want to interrupt your deep sleep.” I hope I sound convincing enough.

“It’s fine, I offered you to use my bed for a reason. So, I take it that you slept well then, right?” He smiles faintly, moving over the edge of the left side so he can get up. Watching him move with such ease like this is...amazing. It’s like he wasn’t blind at all, even when he’s unable to use his eyes. He grabs a black t-shirt from his closet and throws a baby blue button up at me. I catch it and look at it with clear confusion, later directing my silent question at him. My eyes meet his, but they meet my jaw (I think?). “I thought you might want to wear something more comfortable. Sorry, I should’ve offered it last night.” He says apologetically, looking kind of embarrassed.
“It wasn’t necessary, thank you anyway.” He nods and walks out to the kitchen. His stride appears to have regained its normality. Good, that means he’s no longer under scrutinizing pain. I pull off my long-sleeved shirt and put on the one he gives me. As I button it up, I step out into the living room. Matt’s apartment looks so different in broad daylight. It’s cozy, though.

I’m about to open my mouth and ask him a question when he beats me down to it. “If you want to use the bathroom it’s to your right, next to the staircase.” I’m starting to wonder more and more if his real power is telepathy. How could he know? Is borderline creepy. On the other hand, it can be quite useful. I nod in thanks and start scurrying to the bathroom door. Before entering, I stop. I turn around in order to ask him first. Should I take a shower? Would it be a good decision or a bad one? I mean, he could walk in at any given moment...

“Do you mind if I use the shower?” He shakes his head no and, with a sort of playful: “knock yourself out”, grants me permission. Don’t make me walk out stark naked, Murdock! Because if you do…then I don’t know what would happen. I keep creating these stunningly sexual scenarios of “what’s if”; but in reality, none of them would occur. It’s heartbreaking to say the last. Not the sexual part of it, but the whole essence of being together. That’s never going to happen, and it’s sad. I don’t mean to sound like an asshole and assume that you get how awful it feels to love someone who doesn’t love you back; I just hope that you understand me. I don’t want to be alone in this and I can’t tell anybody. If he can figure it out by analyzing me (I’m not even sure if he already did or not), it’ll be more easy to discover it through another person. I hate this situation so much.

Having waited until the water warmed up nicely, I stand exhaustedly under the stream of the shower. I could sell my soul in order to be in here with him behind me, gently caressing my back and sides while kissing softly from my shoulder all the way to my neck. If I were at my house, there would be a hand between my legs by now. What a luscious torture that is this pleasure I feel; I wish to bask in the sinful confines of it.

Once I come out of the shower the smell of freshly cooked food invades my nose and makes my stomach growl in anticipation. God, that smells good. I didn’t know he could cook. No, I’m not being condescending, there are a lot of people who can see that don’t know how to even boil water. Apparently, he can do more than that.

“What is it? It smells delicious. Or maybe I’m just hungry.” He cracks a grin and puts two plates full of pancakes on the round table. He lets me sleep on his couch (and then on his bed) and makes breakfast. Is he just being nice or trying to repay me for last night’s help? Whichever it is, I’m fine with either of them. I could eat a whole cow right now. Last time I ate was yesterday’s lunch. I think he can tell that much from the drool falling down my chin. How inelegant of me.

“Well, I hope that despite my lack of sight I didn’t spoil the food. No matter how hungry you are; bad taste can ruin your appetite.” He says with a sheepish smile while he pulls the kettle out of the coffee machine. “Do you drink coffee or…?” I jerk my head once before he finishes the question and he pours the dark and bitter liquid in two mugs. I don’t like coffee, but I need it to survive my lifestyle. With all the stalking and chasing and fights…I wouldn’t be able to do that without caffeine to keep me awake.

“Thank you for the food, you didn’t have to.” Matt shrugs and hands me one of the white mugs. He sits down next to me, at my right, and starts drinking. I suppose he lives off of the brown liquid too. “And, just for the record, I believe firmly that what you said about being blind making it hard to cook well is absolute bullshit.” He lifts an eyebrow at my chose of phrasing but doesn’t comment on it. He shows a thankful smile and starts digging into his plate. I should follow suit before I pass out or something. Mmm, truly exquisite, best pancakes I ever ate. My delighted moan must have caught his attention because he’s looking strangely at me. “What I meant was,” I say with a mouthful of
squashy and marvelous cake of batter, “that because you’re blind and have enhanced senses your cooking skills are way better than normal people. You possess a very delicate and refined sense of taste, which comes in handy while cooking. If you weren’t a lawyer, I would tell you to pursue a career as a gourmet chef. Although, I don’t think they would trust you that much, and it wouldn’t be a good idea to tell them about your ‘special abilities’. It’s just a though, don’t listen to me.”

“I like listening to you. There’s something about hearing the sound of your voice that…puts me at ease. I don’t really know how to explain it and I know it’s weird but, it’s just the way it is.” He struggles a little while he says this, feeling a bit awkward when saying it. He’s the cutest. It isn’t weird at all, is very sweet and kind. Jesus, Murdock, stop it! I can’t handle so much darn cuteness, it’s killing me softly (see what I did there?).

“Seriously? I could’ve never thought that. It would never cross my mind that someone feels comfortable around me. I mean, apart from my mom. Everybody else hates me or doesn’t give a shit.” I’m such a whiney little bitch. Come on, Mackenzie! You’re sitting right next to Matt Murdock while eating the breakfast that he made for you. It is not the time to get all depressed and melancholic. Look what you did! You erased the beautiful smile out of his face. Now he’s frowning and staring at you with concern and pity written all over his features. Good job, really! Moron…

“I can assure you that your mother isn’t the only one, Mackenzie. Karen, Foggy and I feel not only comfortable being around you, but we feel happy as well. I know, I noticed the positive change that you provoke in them. They’re always happier after seeing you, and I don’t think it has to do exclusively with the work that you do for them. So don’t berate yourself too much.” I’ll never get tired of seeing him smile; exuding so much charm like it wasn’t hard at all. How does he manage to maintain that? He’s always flippanly showing off his handsomeness and smugness. Damn him and his perfect…everything. Ugh, I hate to love him.

“Thank you, Matt, that means a lot to me. I’ll keep trying my best so those opinions never change.” I smile entirely enraptured by his gorgeousness. It should be illegal to be that pretty. Then again, if it were against the law, I wouldn’t be able to see him like this.

“Mackenzie…” He calls my name and I come down to Earth once again. Was I staring stupidly at him while daydreaming? Shit. I make a humming noise, in the pose of a question, and he nods, acknowledging the return of my attention. Oh God, he’s reading me. I need to distract him. “So, what do you want to know first?” He keeps staring at me for a couple of seconds and then grabs his mug. Without turning his head, he takes a sip and licks his lips, cleaning them from any residue of coffee. He must be doing it on purpose, there’s no other way...

“Just tell me what your first indication was.” His voice is even, his breaths are slow. Good, the last thing I want is that he starts freaking out.
“Okay, at first it was plain curiosity. After that night in the alley, the wish to see you again started to develop. It just appeared at random moments, until it became more frequent. Because I can’t make justice for my mother with my own hands, I began to think that maybe I could ask you to do it instead. It was farfetched, but I still hoped to find you again and tell you about it.” I look up at him and see his jaw twitch. His eyes are downcast, staring blankly at his food. “One day, I suddenly found myself watching the people that walked past me in an attempt to notice any detail that could match your appearance. Your suit only leaves half of your face uncovered, so I didn’t have much to work with. Still, there were some things I knew I could use to help me out. Your height and build are a good clue, not everyone has your same size and a fitted body. Those were just a couple of pieces of the puzzle; I got more as time went by. When I started to follow you, and as a consequence got the opportunity to watch you closer, I gathered other important details. For example, the bone structure of your jaw, and the stubble. Two more clues to help me solve the mystery.”

Matt half smiles, but I notice that it doesn’t reach his eyes. I assume there are two reasons for this action: one, he’s internally praising me for my cleverness; second, his reprimanding himself for being so “stupid”. He’s not stupid, neither careless, I just pay way too much attention to certain details that other people dismiss as unimportant.

“Those were the pieces I had, and even after using those to compare Daredevil with every male that matched the description I came empty handed each time. I used to have the feeling that something was missing each time that I searched for you amongst the street crowds. I didn’t know what it was until after meeting you at the precinct. That day, when I came inside the police station, I saw you with Foggy. Out of all the people that were there, you two caught my attention. And what surprised me the most is that you turned when I passed by. You were talking with Foggy, concentrated on the conversation. Neither of us three, including myself and the two cops dragging me, stumbled over you or even grazed you as we went to the interrogation room. So we didn’t get your attention out of touching you, I got your attention because you somehow knew what was going on, or at least to some extent.” I wait for his reaction, trying to measure his surprise. He looks quite impressed actually, raising both of his eyebrows and nodding appreciatively.

“I began to talk with people who saw you as Daredevil, gathering all the information I could from their testimonies. They gave me plenty of material to continue my ‘investigation’. Most of it helped me pinpoint some relevant details that I already had. So far I knew that you were of average height, no offense; strong and fitted, you obviously had to work out and train in order to do all of that; you always wore a stubble in your face, only fluctuating the length of the facial hair; and you voice wasn’t either too low or too high, or so I’ve heard. Having those facts, I started to compare Daredevil with Matt Murdock, looking for all of the matching characteristics I could find. It was only then that I understood that feeling of having missed something important. What really was the common point? Justice.” Matt is staring at me with a confused expression, waiting for me to elaborate further. I wait a couple of minutes, letting the suspense stretch out and regaining my breath a little.

“The few times I spoke with you, or actually listened to you, you always sounded so…righteous. Yeah, I know that you’re a lawyer and all that, but there was something different about it. Foggy didn’t have that sense of justice in his speech, at least not on the same level. I took great pleasure in noticing how pissed you were that day at the precinct after finding out why exactly I was there. It was different from what Foggy was feeling. He was more disappointed that angry, but you? You were furious. You even made me believe you were going to punch those cops in their faces for being so incompetent.” He shrugs, trying to appear calm, but the jaw twitch says otherwise.

“Backing a bit in the story, I made an important connection between your first reaction in the police station and one night I followed you to a warehouse. In that occasion, I was hiding behind some barrels so I could watch without being noticed. At the end, it didn’t work out that well, did it? I’m asking you because you saw me there that night. If I’m wrong, disprove me then.” I stop so he can
answer me. After a court nod of his head, I reassume the story.

“Right. So, things really hit home when I sort of discovered the blind factor. This was something that I got with all the information provided by the witnesses I spoke to. The first time I met you, you already had your new suit; so I didn’t know the old one. Some of the guys that I talked to told me about it. What really interested me was your mask. It covered your eyes completely and it didn’t have any holes you could use to see. I assumed this, and two or three persons seconded it, but the material from which the mask was made…it wasn’t see-through, right?” He exhales forcefully, somewhat disturbed by my cunningness. I feel so fucking smart right now. Also, I feel bad for him. Matt must be internally screaming at himself right now, for being obvious to the extent that a teenage girl can figure out his secret.

“It wasn’t.” was his silent reply. Matt’s gaze is fixed on the mug tightly held between his hands. He’s tense and seemingly unhappy. At this point, I’m starting to think he’ll only get more worked up as I continue my story. There’s nothing I can do, he wanted to know.

“That’s what I presumed. Now, how could a normal guy see with such a mask? It seems impossible; unless he didn’t need to see. One of the many few things that caught my attention was what people told me about your skills. Aside from the whole ninja stuff, a lot of them said that you seemed to know or predict what the criminals were doing or going to do. You were able to dodge punches and kicks easily, even if they came from behind you. How it’s that possible for someone who can’t see through the mask he’s wearing? A person like this must have a very accurate sense of hearing; more importantly, said person would have needed to train his hearing to the point that he can use it while being blindfolded, like a blind person. But then, why would a nonblind person train themselves like that? Why hone their senses to the extreme of being able to use them while not seeing? Maybe, whoever was Daredevil didn’t need to train them so he could fight while wearing a mask he couldn’t see through and that covered half his face. Maybe, just maybe, he was actually blind.” Matt winces slightly, looking away in the direction of the kitchen at his right. Sorry, Matt, I know I’m sounding like a smug asshole, but I can’t help myself.

“From there, I started to put all the pieces together; the physical aspects, the personality aspects, and so on. By this point, I knew for sure some things while I theorized some others. Daredevil was fitted, strong and of average height; had a defined jawline, thin lips and stubble; his voice was in the middle of the spectrum between high and low; he had a righteous sense of justice; he was capable of fighting like a freaking ninja, mostly using his own body as his weapon; he used a mask which he couldn’t see through; had enhanced senses and was apparently blind. Now I know that I was right about all of that, but at that moment half of the characteristics in my constructed description were mere conjectures.” Taking a pause to drink and eat before everything gets too cold for my taste, I study him closely. He takes this as an opportunity to busy himself with something else and stands up with the mug and plate in his hands. As he walks to the kitchen to clean the dishes, I notice the stiffness on his stride. I’m not sure if that’s a consequence of what I’m telling him or just the soreness of his body.

“Like I said in the beginning; this new ‘clue’ ruled out a lot of people for the position of being the Devil of Hell’s Kitchen. If my theory was correct, I needed to search for blind people who matched the description. I only found one.” Matt stops what he’s doing and stares directly at me. He almost looks like his eyes are trained on mine. Then again, from this distance, it’s hard to tell. “Matt Murdock, my very own lawyer who saved my ass from being arrested after doing the right thing. What a coincidence!” With an ironic and wicked grin, I look up at him. He furrows his brow and presses his lips on a thin line.

“You did get arrested. Foggy and I just got you out of there faster than it would normally take.” He says with a matter-of-fact tone, probably regretting to some level having helped me out. He’s not that
wrong, me figuring out his secret it’s basically a threat to him and the people he cares about.

“You still got the point. So, after making this wild and far-fetched connection, I started to follow you during the day. I tried to get definitive proof, but it took me longer than I initially thought. Considering it now, it wasn’t a bad thing, at least when it concerns you. You would be more pissed if I found out sooner.” My tone is cautious, like if I were talking to a bewildered animal. His frown deepens, making him look more offended than angry.

“I’m not mad at you Mackenzie.” He says in sort of a clipped tone. Yeah, right. Good acting, Murdock. I think you should stick to the blind lawyer part, you’re better at it than trying to lie.

“Well, maybe not at me, but you’re definitely angry about this whole situation. I don’t blame you, you have all the right to be upset and to scold me for my actions, but first let me finish my story.” He shuts his mouth and waits for me to continue. Fortunately, Matt seems to have relaxed a bit. “Last night, I was at my usual spot in the rooftop from across the street, waiting patiently for you to come out as Daredevil. Once I saw you walk out the door and start running over other buildings rooftops, I sneaked inside your apartment. I came in to find proof that I was right, hoping that you wouldn’t be here and when you eventually came back, you’ll do it in your Daredevil suit. There was a moment, in the middle of my paranoiac freak out, when I came out with a new and bizarre theory. It was like a last resort safety net, in case you were here or you got back normally dressed; I considered that you could have a twin brother.” Matt appears to be highly surprised and amused by my weird reasoning. I would be too if I weren’t myself. What kind of theory is that even? Geez, it’s so stupid.

“You thought I had a twin brother?” He grins broadly and chuckles a little. Stop laughing at me, Murdock, it’s plausible.

“I theorized it; I wasn’t assuming it or anything. Like I said, it was just for insurance.” I say defensively. Yes, it is ridiculous, but not impossible. “I even had a possible name for him and all.” Using my best ‘kicked puppy’ tone of voice, I hope that he’ll take pity on me and my strange course of thinking. He just keeps laughing at how dumb I am. Rude.

“And what was it, Mike Murdock?” He means it as a joke, or at least I hope so. How the hell did he know? That’s so fucking creepy; definitely, the more disturbing thing that he had said or done. It gives me the willies.

“Y-yeah. How did you know? You’re not a telepath, are you?” Matt’s giggling comes to a sudden stop. He’s looking perplexed at me, with his mouth and eyes wide open and his eyebrows trying their best to reach his hairline. So he was joking then. This can’t just be a coincidence, right?

“Wait, you really picked that name for my supposed twin brother? I said it jokingly, I didn’t new…” Oh, oh. Well, this is kind of awkward, isn’t it? Changing the subject, what are your thoughts about all this so far…? Um, right, this is a one sided thing. Sorry, I keep forgetting, never mind.

“Yes, I was kidding when I did it. How did you come up with the same one?” Matt opens and closes his mouth multiple times, getting nothing out.

“Claire used to call me Mike, back when she didn’t know my real name.” He seems saddened by this. Why? When he spoke about her yesterday night he did it casually. Why is she so important all of a sudden? Is Matt…? No.

“Oh, right, I see. Anyway, it was stupid. After that, you already know what happened, because you were there of course. That’s all.” I try so damn hard to maintain my composure and the tone of my voice even, so it doesn’t waver. I fail, miserably, and I think that my voice never sounded more strangled than now. Oh God, not this. Please, not this. He can’t find out, especially now that I
know... That I know... “Sorry, I should go. My mom will start to freak out the longer I stay out and my stepfather will take his anger out on her. Thanks for everything, Matt; I'll see you... later.” In an attempt to get out as soon as I can, I go back to his room and change quickly back into my shirt and shoes. Fuck, I really need to leave before he can stop me and decipher my...

“Mackenzie, wait! What’s wrong? Why are you leaving so suddenly?” He looks so concerned and I rather wish that he didn’t, it just makes this way more painful for me. Please, Matt, just let go of me... just for now.

“I’m sorry, I’ve to go. Don’t worry, nothing’s wrong, I promise. I just don’t want that my mother suffers because I’m having a good time. We’ll talk in a few days. See ya.” Before he can grab hold of my arm and stop me, I bolt out the front door. Fucking hell! It was going so perfectly, why did I have to screw everything up?! Such a worthless piece of trash I am. How could I believe there wasn’t someone in his life that... he had feelings for? Hell, Claire must be his goddamn girlfriend. I’m a total moron for thinking that he would eventually fall for me. Deep inside me, I knew this was going to happen and still went after him like if I’d the right to. I warned myself, weeks ago, that it was a terrible idea to get close and attached to this man. Did I listen? Of fucking course not! I'm a joke, and he’s probably laughing at me right now. I fell in love with someone who doesn’t love me back. Fucking great!

All this time, I always told myself how impossible it'll be for him to return my feelings. And guess what? I was right! All along, I was right. Now, I'm stuck in this. It's like I'm swimming in a pool filled with shit. No, is even worse, I'm drowning in that pool. How could I let this happen? How could you let this happen? Why didn't you warn me about this, huh? Was it too much to ask, for you to help me avoid falling into this whole mess? Thank you, really! I hope you’re feeling great, you fucking-Stop! Jesus, Mackenzie, what’s wrong with you? I’m sorry, I’m truly sorry. There’s no one to blame besides myself, I know. I’m just... heartbroken. And all I want right now is someone to tell me that everything it’s going to be alright, even if that’s just a lie.

Chapter End Notes

So, each chapter is becoming longer than the previous one, that's why it takes me longer to update. I know that asking for patience might be too much, but I'm doing the best I can (even if it doesn't seem like it).

Anyway, I hope that you enjoyed this chapter and let me know what you think about it and the story so far. If you find any errors that I missed, tell me and I'll fix them. Thank you, truly, for reading. <3
I can't handle the truth

Chapter Summary

"What's the worst thing that could happen? Really now, I don't think I can screw this up more than I already did...

I never learn, do I?"

Chapter Notes

Please don't kill me for not updating in over 20 days! I'm really sorry, it's just that this chapter is 30 pages long and that's not as easy to write as one would think. I hope the more the better.

So, down to business. This chapter has a LOT of things going on. We finally get some action between our dear protagonists. Is not much but it's something. Aside from that, like in previous chapters, there's a fair amount of references not only pertaining to DDTV world, but to other tv shows, movies, songs, etc. Some are obvious, some are not. Hope that you can get 'em all!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It’s been a week since I last saw Matt, back in his apartment. Even when going out to work on the new case that the lawyers are dealing with, I do everything I can to avoid him. Foggy and Karen, oblivious to what’s going on, think that I do it so Matt doesn’t find out that I’m working with them. If only they knew better… Anyway, he hasn't tried to meet me again, which is weird. He didn't know why I left all of a sudden, and I want to believe that I didn’t seem too upset. Maybe he picked up on my change of mood with his enhanced senses and is keeping his physical distance. Oh, before I forget, I’m sorry for freaking out on you earlier. I was just…completely out of it. I knew that there was the possibility of him having feelings for someone else, but getting definite proof was…too much. I don’t think I can look him in the eyes without wanting to cry. I’m so pathetic.

Not taking into account how that night ended for me, he took the whole situation better than I thought. Matt wasn’t mad at me (at himself at large) and he didn’t scold me much. It’s not like he was happy about it, but it could have gone a lot worse. Nevertheless, I need to be extra careful now that I possess the information that every criminal wants. If somebody founds out that I know who Daredevil is, they're going to come after me. It’s probably for the best that I keep my distance and stay away from him as much as I can. I don’t want to give him any more troubles that I already did.

This is what I need, I guess, to take him out of my life and mind. Is the only way I can forget about him, or at least try to. Matt has become such an important part of my life in the last months that it seems nearly impossible to extract him from my heart. But it’s better this way, for him and for me. He doesn’t need me; all I am is trouble, and he has enough of them already. If I can force myself to get over him, then I'll be fine. He's better off without me anyway.
And that’s the exact reason why I answer neither his text messages nor his phone calls. I can only imagine that he got my number from Foggy or Karen. If they know that he did, I’ve no idea. Matt has been trying to reach out to me for the past week. He’s either as stubborn as I am, or just doesn’t get that I’m not going to call him back. No matter how concerned he sounds in the texts and the voicemails, I’m not giving in. Besides, if he was really worried, he wouldn’t try to contact me via cell phone. F&K probably told him that I’m fine and that’s why he hasn’t come looking for me; unless, of course, that now he’s stalking me. I really hope he’s not.

The upside of this entire thing is that I’m no longer constantly putting myself in the line of danger by following Daredevil every night. I got to spend more time with my mom and my grades aren’t going to shit anymore, if I can maintain this until graduation, it’ll be a bonus.

Before I go any further with my story telling, I want to clear some things out. I’m well aware of everything that’s going on and the effects that it has on me. My way of handling this situation it’s not the wisest or the more mature one, I recognize that, but I’m doing what I can. After all, I’m only seventeen years old; I’m young and impulsive, and I take rash decisions. I complain a lot, and I swear a lot too; I’m a whiney little bitch and my thoughts are not the purest (although that can be attributed to the raging hormones of a teen). Most often than not I treat you badly and tell you to shut up. Hell, I even tried to blame you for something that it was entirely my fault. I’m sorry, I really am. Sometimes, it feels like I don’t have anyone but you; I think you are my only friend, honestly.

I’ve got a lot of problems, I see that now. My mom is constantly beaten by my stepfather and I don’t do anything to help her out; my grades are on the floor, threatening with making me redo the entire school year; I get my ass kicked in order to defend the weak from the strong, in the form of nerds and bullies respectively; and on top of that, I fell madly in love with Daredevil. Most of this issues I’m handling them in the wrong way or I’m not even handling them at all. I’ve to start sorting them out quickly; otherwise, my life will go on a highway to hell. Look, you’re probably annoyed by my incessant rambling, but maybe there’s a possibility that you might be going through the same problems, like with school or your family. Maybe you’re even bullied too. I don’t know and it’s not my place to talk about something that I don’t know about, but if we are going through the same shit then we can understand each other a bit more. If this is the case, I really hope that you’re having it better than me. I wouldn’t wish any of this on anyone who doesn’t deserve it. We all have our problems; we just have to learn how to deal with them.

So, now that we’re on better terms, let’s continue this adventure. It would be my honor that you decided to accompany me; sounds good? Great! As I was saying before, so far I haven’t seen Matt. I’ve no idea what he’s up to, but there’s this odd feeling that tells me I’ll find out soon enough. It seems that no matter how hard I try, I can never remove Matt completely out of your life…Bummer. Well, I don’t think I’m doing a great job at it either since I’m standing behind the giant screen in front of his apartment while reading the last text that he sent me. It’s from an hour ago and says “come”. I supposed he referred to his house, from the absence of other details. Right now, despite my lack of knowledge on what might be going on in the dark apartment, I’m debating myself between going in or not. What do you think, should I do it?

I could say that there’s nothing to lose, but that’s a lie. I’ve everything to lose, especially my emotional sanity. Damn, I’m already regretting this. Why did I even come here? Guess I’m just that stupid.

I knock on the door that leads to the inside from the rooftop and I wait to hear a response. When none comes, I open the door slowly. I peer inside and catch a glimpse of a shadow entering the bedroom. Well, here goes nothing.

Trying to descend the stairs without alarming Matt proves to be futile. As soon as I take the first
step down, he pops his head from the bedroom. There’s definitely nothing creepy about it, just unnerving. God, it’s too late to go back the way I came in.

“Mackenzie?” Matt asks tentatively with his eyes cast down to the floor near the beginning of the stairs. Don’t act like you didn’t already know it was me. I reluctantly walk down the rest of the steps and stop right in front of him. This better be worth my time Murdock, otherwise, I’ll kick your ass for the trouble. He comes into the leaving room, shirtless, and I see the myriad of cuts and bruises on his bare chest under the bright light delivered by the screen outside. Jesus fucking Christ. I’ve never seen him in worse shape. What even happened? Did he fell off a ten-story building into a dumpster filled with glass shards? Matt looks like he can barely stand on his feet. He’s going to collapse sooner or…

Matt would’ve almost fell face first to the floor if I weren’t in front of him ready to catch him. He’s so freaking heavy! I can’t hold him for too long. The bed is too far away from us to push him back on top of it, and the couch is even farther than that. My best option is the couch, if I try to push him backward I won’t be able to support his weight and he’ll fall. I turn around and let him rest on my back; this won’t be good for my spine. Dragging my feet on the floor, I manage to take his unconscious body to the couch and lay it there. Well done, Kenzie: task successfully completed. I better get the kit now and start stitching his wounds. This might take the whole night.

“Good morning sunshine.” Matt opens his eyes groggily, moving his head around slightly (as if he was searching for the direction from which my voice was coming, how cute-No!). He tries to get up but the pain that presumably shots up his back stops him. It’s not surprising, considering the high amount of wounds I had to stitch. Just to give you an idea, I filled a regular size plastic bag with tissues full of blood. At one point I’d to start using paper towels since there was nothing else. Is almost a miracle that none of the blood managed to stain the couch.

“What time is it?” His voice sounds hoarse and strained, surely because of the pain. I searched for any kind of painkiller but there’s none. It must really be the Catholicism then…

“Seven thirty. You can go back to sleep if you want; or stay awake and eat breakfast with me.” He seems disoriented and tired. I wonder if he even remembers what happened last night. Matt doesn’t ask any further questions, so I assume that he didn’t forget about the text he sent me. He tries again to get up but, unable to accomplish this task, decides against it and settles more upright on the couch. “That means breakfast then.” He turns his head to the left, clearly more aware of his surroundings this time, and spots me sitting on the opposite couch near the window.

Matt nods once and I get up from my seat with a sigh. I know what is coming, and I’m not happy about it. Better get my hands busy with something to do. In advance of him waking up, I left prepared batter for pancakes and put coffee in the machine. It should be ready by now, so all I have to do is set the table and start frying. Of course, when I say table I actually mean the one in the living room between the couches, since Matt can’t get up. That’s not a problem, but I hope he can eat by himself. I’m not saying that I wouldn’t do it for him if it came down to that…but a really prefer not to. No one can assure Matt that I won’t put his food in my mouth and try to feed him through kisses. He doesn’t need that, surely doesn’t want it, and I couldn’t stand any further self-humiliation. I’ll rather die.

“Why did you come?” His sudden question baffles me into silence. What does he mean? Doesn't he remember that he asked me to come help him? He looks calmly serious, so he probably must remember. Why is he asking then? “You’d been ignoring me all week,” he says as a form of
clarification. Matt looks positively discouraged, allowing me to understand how bad he felt during
said period of time. Was he worried about me? Did he miss me? It’s impossible to remove him from
my heart when things like this happen. Maybe I shouldn’t have come, but then again he would be
dead if I hadn’t.

“Your text sounded serious enough. All your previous messages asked me if I was okay or told me
that you wanted to talk. The last one just said ‘come’, which I considered out of character. It was
short and direct, straight to the point. Something like that couldn’t profess anything good. If you
weren’t in a bad situation and in need of my help, you wouldn’t have texted me that. So yeah, I
considered it an emergency and decided to step in.” Matt relaxes visibly at my answer, most of the
tension plaguing his body leaving it immediately. Still, his expression remains stoically blank. At
least he’s not moping anymore. No, he’s curious, deathly so. “If you want to know, you just have to
ask.”

“Would you answer me if I do?” His tone is kind of sarcastic but laced with concern. Matt’s not
totally wrong, I don’t want to answer but I know I’ll have to eventually. Although not all the truth
needs to be revealed, the part about my feelings can be let out. With a good enough excuse as to why
I fled his apartment last time that we spoke, he won’t even know that I’m lying through my teeth. I
just need to make it so possible and real that it’ll sound convincing. If I believe my own lie, then
there’s no way to find out that I’m being dishonest. It’s a good plan, except for the part where I need
an excuse and I’ve none. Shoot.

While turning the pancakes on the frying pan, I try to come with something to tell him; a reason for
my absence. “In the moment before I left, you mentioned Claire. Since she’s a nurse, I remembered
the time that I spent in the hospital and consequently the time that my mom spent there too. I started
to panic at the fact that I was out all night and morning, leaving my mother completely alone with
that psycho. Not wanting anything bad to happen to her, I ran as fast as I could back home. When I
got there I found her like always, beaten and bloody.” This isn’t a lie; I did find her like that when I
went home after that blissful night. Now that I finally know who Daredevil is (and promised Matt
that I’ll stop following him everywhere), I decided to stay more at home and save my mom a couple
of beatings; since I would be staying away from Matt for my own reasons, I thought it would be best
to take advantage of the situation and take care of my mother. The work I do for Foggy and Karen
didn’t relent, I still need to do something else than being at school and home. Besides, it would’ve
been complicated and awkward to tell them about what’s going on (and I don’t want to lie to anyone
else).

“I’m sorry to hear that, Mackenzie.” He either bought the lie or is well aware of it to have some
sensibility and not ask. I want it to be the first option, but knowing that entire heartbeat thing makes
me feel like it’s more the second one. This is agonizingly stressful; I need a long vacation on a
deserted island or something. The universe seems to feel otherwise because Matt is looking
increasingly doubtful as time goes by. Maybe I should clarify a bit more.

“I was too busy and preoccupied to answer your texts or calls, I’m sorry. Between school, home
and street work I had my mind and hands filled to capacity. I thought about telling Karen and Foggy
to tell you that I was okay, but it would’ve been suspicious. They don’t know anything of…this.” I
motion with my hand to signal the entirety of the room, stating what I mean by saying “this”. They’re
unaware of my stalking of Matt and Daredevil, and the fact that I know Matt’s secret. They also
don’t know that I spent a night here in his apartment.

Matt appears to be deep in thought for a moment, “staring” out the window with an unreadable
expression. His head cranes slowly to the right and he trains his eyes on me, his face contorting with
confusion. Brows knit together, mouth slightly agape and shoulders tense. This ain’t good.
“Mackenzie…” Just as he says this, tentatively and with kind of an inquisitive tone of voice, I finish
the pancakes and pour the coffee into a couple of mugs. Before Matt can continue with what I assume is a revelation he just had, I take everything to the coffee table and hand him the mug. Shut up and drink, Murdock, I don’t want to hear what you figured out. “Thank you,” he says quietly and takes a sip of the brown and bitter liquid after managing to sit up properly on the couch. I take my sit on the same couch as before and entertain my mouth with the same beverage. It’s hot as hell, but I’ll rather burn my tongue that answer to whatever he was going to say.

I like to think that it all started that one night when I met Daredevil, but in truth, it began in the precinct. If Matt hadn’t turned around; if he hadn’t noticed me…I wouldn’t be here. Nothing would have ever happened and my life wouldn’t be this fucking up. “Why you did it?” My voice is calm and quiet, too drained of energy. Did he recognize me at that time? I only met him once before, but he could’ve differentiated my heartbeat, eventually at least. Was that it?

“What?” Matt sounds distant and confused, not understanding what I’m asking. He puts his mug on the coffee table and manages to shift slightly to his right side so he can face me a bit more. He’s reading me, as always, trying to figure out how I feel and why. Don’t do it, Murdock, nothing good would come out of that.

“That day, at the police station, why did Foggy and you help me out?” His brow furrows as if my question was stupid and had an obvious answer. Maybe it does, but I want to hear it from him. Give me a reason to stop blaming myself, or one to do it harder. “Don’t say that it’s because you have a soft spot for kids or that it was the right thing to do, defend the innocent and all that shit. Give me the truth, Murdock. How did you even know that I was innocent? I could’ve killed the piece of shit that is my stepfather for all you care.” At this point, I’m not sure if the venom dripping from my tone is directed at him or at my mother’s husband. Guess it’s the last one, I’m pissed at Matt, but no matter how much I want to, I can’t bring myself to hate him.

“Your heartbeat,” he says simply with his eyes cast on the rug beneath his feet. “It wasn’t frantic like the one that victims of attacks possess, neither was completely steady like the one that criminals have. I could smell different types of blood on you, so you weren’t only hurt but managed to inflict damages as well. You were clearly in a fight, and angry about it. Your body was warm from the rage you felt. Since a couple of officers were dragging you, it seemed that you were guilty of something, otherwise, you wouldn’t be handcuffed. As they passed by with you between them, I turned so I could stay focused on you and the possible cause that brought you here. When I did, you looked at me too, your heartbeats spiking at that. At that moment I knew that I’d met you before, somewhere, so I told Foggy about taking the case and he said ‘why not?’” Once he finishes his tongue darts out of his mouth to wet his dry lips. That doesn’t actually answer my question, but having the knowledge of what made him interested in me is enough.

“So you did recognize me after all. I knew it.” The last part is only murmured, despite the fact that he can still hear it. I shake my head in disbelief, not processing the fact that he saved me thrice.

“I did. That’s how I knew that you were following me, and working with Foggy and Karen.” How did he found out the last part? I wasn’t around when he was, always meeting them when Matt was absent. Probably was something else that gave away my presence, like a perfume or something. Can he distinguish me from everybody by smelling my natural scent? What those it even smell like? I could ask him, but I really don’t want to. That would be way too personal, to know what Matt thinks about my body’s natural smell. It could be utterly disappointing or the other way around. Either seems awful for me and my heart.

“Right,” is the only response I can manage to get out, sounding truly exasperated. His eyebrows knit in confusion, trying to put a finger on what I’m thinking. You read body language, not minds. “I should get going. We both have things to do and I don’t want to bother you more than necessary.”
Getting up, I stretch a little and watch his face contort with something akin to annoyance. Matt starts to open his mouth as if to say something, but quickly shuts it. Well then.

“You’ve never bothered me, Mackenzie. I enjoy your company more than you think.” He says this with such seriousness and conviction that for a moment I believe it’s true. Second passes and I regain my composure, not wanting to show how much his comment affects me. I’ve to be strong and pull myself out of the water before I drown. He’ll be the end of me if I let him. “I hope that you already know this, but if you need anything, either help or just someone to talk with, I’m here.” Fuck. No.

“Thanks, Matt, but I don’t think that that’s really necessary.” I need to practice more my acting skills, they’re terrible. My voice wavers, threatening to crack. How stupid and pathetic I am. He notices, his face twisting with worry. I need to get out. If I don’t do it now, I never might be able to. “I’ll see you around,” I say before he can protest any further. It’s a lie, we both know it. I’ll do my damn hardest to stay away from him, and he’ll do the same but to keep in contact with me.

Can you believe it’s my birthday? Today’s my goddamn birthday and I don’t even give a flying fuck. I don’t have any friends; my stepfather is an asshole that hates me; my mom is too busy tending to her newer wounds (not that I’m complaining); Karen and Foggy are off researching on their latest case; and Matt…well, nowadays our “relationship” it’s complicated (and I don’t mean like those stupid and hysteric couples on Facebook that change their relationship status every two or three days). We’re not a couple, anyway. If by any chance today is your birthday too, then I wish you a happy one (and I hope it’s happier than mine).

So, today it’s practically an enforced “me” day since I’m spending it completely alone; or at least so far. Being poor doesn’t help much either, I can’t buy myself anything fancy, not even tasty food to treat myself. Every teenager has this stupid fantasy in which you believe that once you are eighteen you can do whatever you want. Well, guess what? I can’t do as much shit as I couldn’t do before. Still broke as fuck and without anyone who cares enough. Maybe I should get a job, you know, one that actually pays. No matter how much I like working for Foggy and Karen, they don’t pay me and I could really use some money.

Speaking about the happy still-not-a-couple-yet, as I was walking through the Kitchen, I just realize that I unconsciously ended up in front of their office. The now too familiar sing reading “Nelson and Murdock, Attorneys at law” staring back at me. What drew me here in the first place, anyway? Not having anywhere else to go, I decide to go up the stairs and stay in the office for a while, waiting in the hopes that someone shows up. At this miserable point in my life, I don’t even care if it’s Matt who comes through the door. My heart skips a beat when I hear someone coming up the steps and into the narrow hallway. Two shadowy figures stand in front of the office’s door, putting a key in the hole and unlocking it. The wood creaks, revealing Karen and Foggy on the other side looking up at me in what appears to be a surprised delight. How wonderful. I let go of the breath I was holding in, not even realizing I was doing it, and slump further in the chair I’m currently sitting in, right across the front door.

“Hey, Kenzie, what are you doing here?” Foggy asks with a cheerful tone. Good, they’re not mad at least. Both of them hang their coats and Karen enters the little kitchen to start making coffee. She sucks at it, but I don’t want to point it out and hurt her feelings, she’s way too nice to be a dick at. Foggy goes to his office and sets his satchel on his desk, taking some papers out of it and starting to arrange them neatly in different stacks.
“Just went out for a walk and ended up here unconsciously, sorry,” I answer apologetically. Even on the anniversary of my birth, I don’t want to bother anyone with my unwanted presence. Shit, this sucks. Karen looks at me with worry in her eyes and hands me a cup of coffee. Not even a horrible tasting hot beverage can make things worse. Fuck, I did it again, didn’t I?

“Are you okay? You don’t seem like it.” Although I appreciate Karen’s concern, I rather not talk about everything that’s going down the toilet in my life right now, especially not about the problem regarding Murdock and my feelings for him (and the lack of feeling from him). If I do, he’ll find out one way or another. With all that enhanced senses crap and...

“I’m fine, I just…it’s not a good day for me.” Taking into account the fact that it’s my birthday and the only person that knows and cares is trying to sleep away a concussion provided earlier by the bastard she’s married to. Karen sits on her desk chair, right in front of me, and stretches her arm so she can grab my hand and squeeze it. It’s a bit reassuring, but not enough to change the course of the day. By now, I believe that the only thing that can make me happy is Matt telling me that he loves me. Yeah, right, like that’s ever going to happen. Keep dreaming Mackenzie; maybe someday you just won’t wake up anymore.

“Is there anything that we can do to improve your mood and make you feel a little better,” asks Karen gently, caressing my hand softly. Almost just like Matt does. Foggy comes out of his office and stands against the wall on the side of the desk; his look of worry matches Karen’s. They’re two of the sweetest people I’ve ever met, but right now…I just wish I’ve never been born. Shaking my head ‘no’, I pray for this conversation to be over. My best option is going home. Probably not, though, unless I want to get yelled at even more. “Maybe if we call Matt and go for a coffee or something,” Foggy intervenes, trying for a more joyful strategy. I’m not feeling like seeing Matt right now. He’ll just pick up on my sour mood even if I try to hide it, and push me until I tell him what the problem is.

“You really hate my coffee making skills that much, don’t you?” Karen asks Foggy accusingly in a disbelieving tone of voice. If her face of hurt astonishment is anything to go by…I think Mr. Nelson is pretty much screwed. Foggy starts babbling something incoherent, trying and failing to defend himself while moving his hands around as if expecting us to understand him via signaling. This gets me giggling a little, amused by the complete silliness and absurdity of it all. I’m on the brink of tears and I don’t know if they’re of sadness or happiness.

Foggy tries to distract Karen’s indignation by fishing out his cell phone and proceeding to call Matt, but before he even gets down half his number I stop him, reaching up to grab his wrist. He looks down at me, surprised and confused at the same time, unable to understand why I stopped him so suddenly. Unwittingly, my cheeks flush fifty shades of red and I freeze mid stand. Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck!

Karen and Foggy exchange a knowing glance and they start to laugh at my expense. What the duck? “What’s wrong Kenzie, too flustered to see Matt today?” Foggy asks teasingly. Oh, no. No, no, no, no, no. Shit! They KNOW! How could I even think that they would be oblivious to my feelings for Matt? So freaking stupid! If they knew for…who knows how long, it means that Matt can be aware too.

“W-what are you even t-talking about?” Stop stuttering, Mackenzie, Christ, get a hold of yourself. Foggy smiles like he won a Nobel price or something, feeling triumphant and content.

“Oh, don’t act like you’ve no idea what I’m talking about. I knew since the first day that we met.” Picturing the day I got arrested, I remember my intensive inspection of Matt. At that time I didn’t care, thinking that the probability of never seeing them again was pretty high. Now, looking back on
it, I shouldn’t have been so obvious about it. Damn me and my lack of self-control.

“Was it really so evident all this time? I thought no one managed to notice.” I cringe at my own words, finding myself stupid in the light of this revelation. They look at me with what I recognize as pity at first, but then I analyze it a little better and see that is just warm sympathy; the kind that you receive from people who care deeply about you. I never thought that I would feel blessed to have a couple of lawyers and their secretary as friends, legal problems aside. “You didn’t tell Matt, right?” They would never do that, I think, but I got to be sure.

“Tell him what? That you moon over him every time that he’s around?” He makes it sound so corny and cliché, it’s annoying. I don’t moon over Matt, okay? Maybe just a little bit. Ok, shut up.

I suppose my only option right now is to admit it and suck it up, otherwise, they won’t let this go and they will hold it until the end of time. And if that last case scenario ends up happening, Matt will sooner or later find out. “Fine, you’re right. I’ve certain ‘feelings’ for Matt, but it doesn’t mean that I’m crazy about him, okay? Don’t exaggerate.” I curse myself when I fail at sounding serious and upset. I need to put my shit together before Matt so happens to burst through the goddamn door.

“Come on, you fat liar! You’re so in love with him that it makes me think that we’re in a freaking rom-com. It’s sweetly disgusting.” He did not just say that. More so, he did not just scream that. Is he insane? If Matt was even two blocks away from the office he could’ve heard…

“Jesus, Foggy, don’t scream that! I think that the whole neighbor heard you. Chill out, I don’t want him to find out…” Before I can continue with my ranting, the door opens quietly with the softest of squeaks. The first thing I see when I crane my neck in the direction of the intruding sound is a white cane. No. No, no, no, no, no, NO! The next thing (or person, more accurately) is Matt, who swiftly walks in and puts his cane down in a corner before he takes off his coat. Motherfucking Jesus Christ. Holy duck, I’m fucked.

“You don’t want who to find out about what?” Oh God, he’s acting as if he doesn’t know at all. I guess it was expected, especially since Karen doesn’t know shit about his secret. I stare at Foggy, completely shocked and out of words. He looks back at me with the same kind of expression, aware of Matt hearing extensions.

Matt gazes blankly at the three of us, expecting someone (mostly me) to answer him anytime soon. Karen looks away and starts busying herself with her paperwork. Foggy excuses himself by saying that he has a shit-ton of documents to which go through, he cracks a terrible joke and disappears into his small office. I’m left alone in the spotlight, having Matt’s full attention all to myself. He tilts his head, his patience wearing off as time goes by, Scheisse.

“It’s nothing.” My heart beats so fast I’m starting to believe that it’ll pop out of my chest. Matt’s jaw twitches in the way that’s overly familiar to me and swallows down the retort that’s dying to come out. ‘I know that you’re lying’, he wants to say. I feel like one of the criminals that Daredevil fights must feel when they’re confronted with the same question, knowing that not saying the truth would only gain them more pain.

Matt’s mouth opens to say something but Karen (thankfully) beats him to it. “Hey, Mackenzie, isn’t today your birthday?” Naively, I thought that whatever Karen had to say would save me from what I know Matt was about to lecture me with (even with Karen right in front of him). Truth be told, I was fucking wrong. My entire face contracts painfully like if I’d a black hole in the middle of it, trying to suck me off into oblivion. I wish I was that lucky. Matt’s eyebrows shoot up and his mouth half opens, clearly taken aback by Karen’s sudden inquiry. Foggy, who surely was eavesdropping, comes out of the office beaming like an excited puppy. Great, now the two things that I didn’t want them to know are out in the open. Why doesn’t a piano just fall on top of me, giving me a mercifully
crushing death?

I want to lie and say no, but Matt will pick it up and say otherwise, excusing himself somehow. “Yes,” I say reluctantly, hating how my voice sounds so resigned. Foggy hugs me from behind, shaking me wildly and congratulating me. Karen gets up and comes to hug me too, waiting until Foggy releases me from his bear-like embrace. I look over at Matt and watch with relief that he smiles faintly. Well, got my ass saved by this depressing date.

“Why didn’t you tell us?” Karen asks half upset and half-happy. She holds me at arm’s length and stares at me as if I’m some kind of alien from Mars.

“It has never been a celebratory day for me really.” Matt presses his lips in a thin line at this, balling his fist at his sides. Karen makes an “oh” noise and puts both of her hands over her chest. Foggy half-smiles apologetically and rests his right palm over my left shoulder. Again, is not pity, is sympathy. “It’s okay, don’t worry, I’m used to it. Actually, is the first time that I spend my birthday with someone else than my mother.” Before I can react to it, I’m being crushed in a bear hug by the three of them. Unfortunately, I got K&F covering my front and back, preventing me (by accident, I think) from full contact with Matthew. Damn it, it’s not fair!

Once we separate, Foggy perks up with a ‘brilliant’ idea (in his opinion, not mine). “We’ll celebrate among us then! Let’s get out of here and go somewhere else, maybe get something to eat or whatever. What do you say K?” It didn’t work with Karen and it’s definitely not going to work with me. If anything I should be ‘M’, not ‘K’ (I know that it comes from ‘Kenzie’, but still). Even though I appreciate Foggy’s enthusiasm, I don’t feel like going out today. I’ll just rather stay here or inside somewhere that’s not crowded with people. He seems to pick up on my sour mood and quickly changes his offer. “Or maybe we could just order some take out and stay here? We don’t need to go into the wild of the Kitchen if you don’t want to.”

“Yeah, I mean, it sounds fun enough to me,” says Karen agreeing. These guys… They do too much for me, and in exchange, I give them so little. I don’t deserve their kindness. Somehow, Matt becomes aware of my discomfort with the whole situation and offers yet another alternative.

“We could go to my apartment and order some Tai food from the place around the corner. We’ll be more comfortable and free from the risk of attracting more rats into the office.” His tone is flat and even, not giving away any emotion, but still delivering a joke with a sly smirk. We laugh a little, minding the thought of rats running around, which is quite disgusting. Shit, I don’t know. Matt’s house… even if Foggy and Karen are there it could be awkward. Fuck it; I don’t want to make this weirder than it already is.

“Very well, let’s go.”

The sound of hysterical laughs and wet gasps for air fill the room with warm content. Gosh, I haven’t laughed like this in such a long time. Not since my father…

“Oh God, I can’t breathe,” Karen struggles to get the words past her lips. None of us can, to be honest. We’re all equally choking while trying to get some air down our throats. It’s nice, painfully so. We ended up eating in Matt’s living room, with K&F perched on the individual couches in front of the larger one. The remaining contents of the Tai food sit in their respective boxes on the coffee table. I ate until I almost exploded. The food was delicious, or maybe the company I currently have
made it that way. Who knows?

“My sides hurt so badly,” Foggy manages to say before bursting into another set of breathless giggles. Oh man, we’re so silly. Slowly, we start to calm down one by one. There was a moment in the middle of all the fuss when I thought that I would throw up from the laughter attack that I was suffering. If it wasn’t for Matt, who helped me to breathe normally again, the carpet would be full of half-digested Tai food. Just thinking about it makes want to puke.

“Shit, is so late already, how much time did we spend laughing?” Karen says with a breathy laugh, picking up her phone. From her shocked expression and the dark sky looming outside, I gather that it’s pretty fucking late. “I should get going, or else I won’t sleep enough to be functioning in the morning.”

“You’re right,” Foggy agrees, getting up from his seat and stretching his arms over his head. Before he can say more, a tired yawn interrupts him. “We’ve to get up early tomorrow if we want to get to the courthouse in time.” Oh, yeah, they have a trial tomorrow morning for their latest client. I hope they win.

“We can get a cab together, my place is halfway yours,” Foggy tells Karen. She nods and starts to grab her coat and purse. Foggy does the same with his jacket and satchel, walking slowly to the front door. He stops and turns in my direction. “What about you, Kenzie? We can drop you out at your house if you want to,” he offers me politely. Right, I need to go to. I can’t stay for obvious reasons involving my feelings for Matt and all of that, and neither can I keep him from getting a good night of rest for tomorrow. He’ll need the energy.

“Don’t worry; I’ll see that she gets home safe,” Matt interjects, confusion marrying both of K&F faces. What is he…? “There are a few things I would like to speak with her alone,” he clarifies. The two individuals currently leaving make an ‘oh’ face and exchange a knowing look.

“Sure, no problem, we’ll see you tomorrow then. Have a good night.” Says Foggy nervously, trying to get out as soon as possible. “We really had a great time, and I hope that you had it too, Mackenzie. Happy birthday again,” adds Karen before she goes through the door and out of sight, followed closely by Foggy. They were my only escape from the uncomfortable talk that I was dreading to have with Matt. Well shit. As I hear the sound of the door closing (sounding way too final) I turn around and face Matt, who’s standing beside the couch. I try and fail to swallow the lump in my throat. What am I even going to say? Now he knows and I feel like everything will fall apart if any of us dares to utter a single word.

“So…what do you want to talk about?” His voice is soft in contrast to the building tension taking over his body. Matt’s face remains impossibly blank and unreadable, not giving away what he might be thinking or feeling. I nod absentmindedly and mechanically maneuver my body towards the couch. Once I’m sitting, stiffly and awkwardly, Matt sits right next to me and takes off his glasses. Good, maybe I’ll be able to decipher him more easily without them. Hm, probably not, though.

“So…what do you want to talk about?” I ask uncomfortably, avoiding his gaze at all costs. He shifts closely, forcing me to move on the couch until I’m cornered against the left armrest. Shitshitshitshit. Matt’s eyes are glued to my face, making me feel like I’m some kind of germ under a microscope. His left arm drapes over the backrest and his body is only a few inches away from mine. All that he has to do is put his right hand on the armrest and he’ll have me completely trapped. There’s no escape.

“Why didn’t you tell me about your birthday?” Oh, thank God. For a second I thought he would bring up what transpired earlier today in the office. Wait, no, he can still ask that later.
“I don’t know; I’ve just been so busy…” Is a lie, a huge lie, but maybe he won’t notice it. His lip twitches as a warning of his anger rising. Fuck, he noticed. “I’m sorry; I wasn’t trying to avoid anything. Well, actually, I was. Even when it’s literally about me, I don’t want it to be. Karen, Foggy and you are way too busy to waste time with me, although you ended up doing it anyway. I expect that you guys didn’t have anything else to do, otherwise I’ll feel worse than I already do, seriously.” My incoherent babbling doesn’t seem to confuse him any more than the words themselves do. “Speaking about that, I should go, you need to sleep because tomorrow-”

“We’re not done talking.” Matt’s tone is that serious and deadly one that elicits two opposite reactions in me: one, it incredibly turns me on; two, it scares the crap out of me. Yeah, it’s maddening. I settle a bit more comfortably in my narrow spot on the couch and divert my eyes from his face, placing them securely on the floor. Muttering a quiet ‘okay’, Matt resumes his speech. “If you’d told me beforehand I would’ve brought you a gift or something,” he says and the ghost of a smile passes through his face.

“Oh, Matt, don’t. Please, it would only make me feel bad and-” Something briefly crosses Matt’s face, an expression I cannot quite place. What? His brows knit together and his lips morph into a straight line. It’s completely different from what I saw before, that weird thing his face did at the beginning of my sentence…Was that a reaction to my ‘oh, Matt’? Oh, my-

“Why not? I don’t want to sound bluntly mean, but I believe that there aren’t a lot of people who give you gifts on your birthday. Sorry, that was awful,” he says apologetically, sounding a bit pissed at himself. No offense taken, that’s true.

“Is just…forget about it, doesn’t matter. Look I really need to go now and you should get some sleep-” He clicks his tongue, efficiently shutting me up (like if I was a dog or something; what the hell?). He’s not letting me go, isn’t he? Fuuueck. Matt leans in and for a brief instant I think that he’s about to kiss me, but he stops shortly from my face. I can feel his hot breath barely gracing my clavicles.

“There’s something else I want to discuss with you.” His low and stone cold tone paralyzes me on the spot. I don’t dare to move, way too fucking scared to do so. Wishing my body could shrink until it disappears, I try to prepare myself for what is coming. “I’ve been aware for a while about your…feelings.” This is it, this is the end. This is when I die. Goodbye cruel world, it’s over, walk on by. My eyes shut on their own accord, not wanting to see his reaction to that statement. I wish the floor opened and something came out to drag me down to Hell. That would be way better than this. Nothing in the world could’ve prepared me for Matt’s confrontation. I need a drink. I never drink alcohol, never needing it or liking it, but right now I want to be hammered.

“Matt, whatever you’re talking about, I’ve no idea-” I try to divert the conversation with a stupid lie. It’s very ineffective.

“Cut the crap, Mackenzie, you’re in love with me.” Wow, hey, what? Shit. That’s…way too straightforward for me. I mean, he’s right, but still. Who says something like that in that way? So fucking rude, Murdock. Wait, am I crying? When did I…? “Oh I-I’m sorry, Mackenzie, I didn’t mean to be so direct. It’s just that, you know how much it pisses me off when someone lies to me. Please, don’t do it. And I’m not scolding you for your feelings, just for the lying. Let’s talk this out, okay?” His hands find mine, squeezing them reassuringly. Matt’s smile is small and warm, promising the impossible. He is going to scold me for my feelings one way or another, I know it already. I’m not stupid.

“What’s there to talk about?” I ask begrudgingly, not wanting to meet his eyes. Seriously, there’s nothing to ‘talk about’. It’s simple; I’m in love with him and he knows it. End of the discussion.
“Why didn’t you tell me? All this time…I figured out by measuring and analyzing your reactions every time that you were near me, even with the fact that you tried to hide it. It didn’t work, by the way.” Well, who would’ve thought about that?! Thanks, Capitan Obvious, I wasn’t aware of my royal fail. Never in my entire life could I’ve guessed that he knew about my feelings before Foggy shouted it to the whole neighbor. If the look I give him, full of pissed disbelief, goes unnoticed, I swear I’m going to scream and rip my hair out.

“What did you expected me to say? ‘Hey Matt, how’s it going? So, I wanted to tell you that I love you, no big deal. Alright, see you later.’” Doing the best impersonation of myself that I can manage, I try my hardest to make him see reason.

“Well, not like that, but you could’ve told me before I sensed it and heard Foggy almost scream it.” I cringe when he mentions the last part. There’s no need to constantly remind me of that, it’s embarrassing. He places one of his hands on my knee and I feel like I was just showered with freezing water. What is he _doing_?

“Ballet shoes,” I mumble absentmindedly, searching for whatever that might divert this agonizing conversation. Matt says something but I can’t hear him; I don’t want to either. I suppose that he asked me about my apparently nonsensical outburst. “That was the most precious gift I’ve ever been given. It was from my mom; when I was six.” With the clarification, Matt sits back and listens intently. “I always loved ballet. I don’t know why; I just did. In 2003, a world-recognized ballet dancer came to my neighbor to give free ballet classes to the girls and boys who wanted to learn but didn’t have the resources to pay for classes in a ballet school. I asked her for weeks to let me go, and I thought that I would never convince her. On my sixth birthday, she gave me a pair of small and pink ballet shoes and told me I could go to the classes. It was one of the best moments in my life.” I start to tear up, unable to keep my emotions under control. The arm Matt kept at the backrest moves slowly until his left hand touches the nape of my neck with a delicacy you wouldn’t believe that the Devil of Hell’s Kitchen could possess. It makes me go totally rigid for a second, but soon enough I relax into it. “Sometimes, I wish I had a pair, so I could dance again. The last time that I did was long ago, but I still remember most of the movements and steps. I would be so happy if I did…” At the end, my voice cracks. There’s no use in trying to contain the tears any longer.

“Mackenzie…?” His voice sounds so distant; like he’s far away from me. I wish he were; his presence only manages to make this more painful than it should be. Fucking hell, get a grip of yourself, Mackenzie!

“I can’t be around you anymore, Matt; it’s too painful for me. This has to stop, all of this, I need to pull myself together and I can’t do it with you in my mind. I love you, but it is a problem because you don’t love me back and to want something you can have, it just…drives you crazy. And I can’t, I can’t do this. Please.” I beg with tears streaming down my cheeks, voice rogue from all the raw emotion that I’m finally letting out. Confessing him my love feels like taking off a backpack full of weights after running a marathon. I look at him and he seems lost for a moment, not knowing what to say or do. Just let me go, Murdock! Let me go.

“I understand that you need to distance yourself from me, and I won’t prevent you from doing that. I just don’t want to let you go home like this, feeling so sad. Let me give you a little something first before you go, and if you still want to leave after you receive it that’s fine with me.” I don’t move or say anything, staring suspiciously at him. What is he planning? This better be good or else I’ll punch him in the face (chill, I won’t. He’s way too pretty.) “Okay, good,” he says after taking my silence as an affirmative answer. “I need you to trust me and close your eyes. Can you do that for me?” He asks with a gentle tone, not wanting to upset me in any way. I nod once and shut my eyelids. “May I?” His question indicates that he’s asking me permission to move. I assume that he wants to get up to get whatever the ‘gift’ is. Nodding once more, I feel the couch shift beneath me
when he starts to move.

Instead of Matt’s weight leaving my side, I sense that he’s getting closer and closer to me. What the hell is he-?

Everything around me stops at the same time that I become oversensitive to all of it. The cars rushing through the streets of the Kitchen; the blinding light provided by the gigantic screen; the sensation of Matt’s warm fingers pulling me by the neck; Matt’s soft and plump lips caressing mine deftly, with a passion that is there but at the same time appears not to be. My body stills, every muscle tensing in distress. Why? Why this? Something wet and slimy bumps against my teeth and for a second I panic until the realization hits me: it’s Matt’s tongue. What is he doing? Is he asking me for access? I open my mouth tentatively and he slips his tongue inside. If I were watching this as an outside person, or if someone told me how this is like, I would find it disgusting (yes, this is my first kiss, don’t make a fuss about it). But somehow it’s just…magical, you know? Matt’s so delicate and sweet with every move he makes. I feel like I’m floating on a cloud or something (not like I’m tripping on acid, though).

Matt’s face angles in the right way, so he’s able to deepen the kiss. The exploration of my oral cavity with his tongue becomes more intensive as the minutes tick by. After a moment of doubt, I push my tongue forward to start a tickling dance with his. This is so surreal. I feel like I can’t breathe. In an attempt to gather some air into my lungs, I try to inhale some oxygen through my nose, but my brain is so immersed in the kiss alone that I end up breathing through my mouth. Of course, this means that what’s supposed to be a quiet intake of air results in some kind of needy moan. What the entire fuck, Mackenzie? Matt stops completely and pulls away. I feel tempted to lean in and start kissing him again, but I know better than to push my luck.

“Do you want to leave now?” He asks between pants. Oh my, he’s so freaking sexy. Like hell I would want to leave. I mean, hello, you really asking that, Murdock? “If you do, I’ll understand; if otherwise, we should move to the bed.” Is he for real? This was supposed to go to hell, all of this, and now…Did Matt just kissed me and is now telling me to sleep with him, like, on the same bed? I must be dreaming, is the only reasonable explanation.

“Okay, let's go,” I say automatically, without thinking. He grabs my hand and stands up, leading me to his bedroom. Right now I don’t even care if this doesn’t end in sexy time; I just want to cuddle with him forever.

“How long it has been since you last danced?” Matt asks above the sound of frying pancakes. Last night was wonderful. He held me close to him until I fell asleep, speaking to me quietly all the time. There wasn’t a repetition of that wonderful kiss, but it doesn’t matter. I get that he feels conflicted about his feelings; after all, he’s ten years older than me. Right after we settled on the bed he kind of panicked and asked me how old I am. The sigh of relief that left him hurt a little, but it was understandable.

“I stopped when my dad died,” is my muted reply. For some reason, unknown to me, Matt’s really interested in the whole ballet deal (or at least as much as it concerns me). He talked about it last night too.

“If you could do it again, would you dance for me? I’ll like to see you do it.” Wow, where did that came from? Now I get why he was so adamant with knowing more about my brief dance “career”.

He wants me to dance for him? How will that work? I mean (and pardon me if it sounds too obvious or offensive), he’s blind. How exactly is he going to “see” me dance? He has his enhanced senses, but can he really see that much?

“How? No offense.” It sounds even worse when I say it out loud. Thankfully, I stop there and don’t include everything else that I was thinking.

“None taken. And you know, I can ‘see’ movement after all, so I’ll be able to watch you. Don’t worry about it.” His reassuring smile is as charming as him. Can you believe those same lips, which are pulling a smile like that off, kissed me? I can’t.

“If I could, I would, only for you.” It’s true, if I had a pair of shoes I would only dance for him, not even for myself. It’s not beautiful anymore. Not without my dad. The entire reason why I practiced so hard was to perform perfectly on the show we were preparing for New Year’s Eve. He never made it to the show, I never danced in it. He was killed that same night. Since then, I swore I wouldn’t dance again.

Yes, I’m breaking my promise by telling Matt that I would do it, but you can’t say no to him when he’s grinning at you in a way that makes your panties drop. It won’t happen, anyway, so it’s okay to say yes.

“Mackenzie, about last night,” he says out of nowhere. Matt leaves the tacit question hanging in the air. I know what he means and I know that he was going to say something like ‘we can’t tell anyone’ or ‘we should think this through’. I don’t want to hear any of that. All I want him to vocalize is: ‘that was amazing’; ‘I love you’; or ‘let’s do it again’. Nothing more, nothing less. “I want to take things slowly. Even if you are eighteen now, you’re still ten years younger than me. Foggy and Karen won’t have a problem with us being together, but they’re not the ones I’m concerned about. So…can we take one step at a time? What do you say?”

“I say that it’s fine, as long as you keep your promise.” Matt furrows his brow and looks in my general direction with a face full of confusion. He didn’t forget already, did he? “Don’t push me away.” His puzzled expression morphs into one of understanding, showing a wide smile playing in his face.

“I swear I won’t,” he says while handing me a plate full of pancakes bathed in maple syrup and decorated with blueberries. Simply perfect.

“I’ll hold you to that, Murdock.” My reply is obstructed by the big amount of mushy pancakes filling my mouth. I’m so fucking hungry, but I don’t think it’s for food. Matt sits next to me and starts digging into his own plate, all suits and red tinted sunglasses. I think I never loved someone this much. It’s weird, enticingly so.

The last couple of days has been wonderful. I haven’t seen Matt yet, but the memory of the kiss we shared and everything that happened afterward was enough to appease me. He’s still busy with Daredevil patrols and the latest case he’s working on alongside Foggy. The only real interaction that I’d during this time was with Karen, who asked me about all the details of that miraculous night. I still can’t believe it, can you? Yeah, it’s a dream come true.

He told me about his feelings. You know, he was aware of mine for some time now, but I hadn’t
the slightest idea that he felt the same. Damn, wouldn’t even have bet on it. Matt said that he’s not sure when they started to develop; that suddenly, one day, he figured out that he had them. Kind of like what I went through. What hurt me a little is that he confessed that he didn’t want to fall in love with me at first, but at the end, he couldn’t help it.

I mean—Oh, wait, I just got a text. It’s from Matt! It says ‘Meet me after work’. How weird and unexpected, but cool. Although he doesn’t say where; I can assume he’s referring to his apartment. Okay then; we finish at five in the afternoon (he’s working at the office and I’m currently on my daily patrol, looking for information). Now that Matt acknowledged my involvement with Foggy, I officially work for both of them. He still doesn’t like it, but we agreed in disagreeing.

Right now it’s four and a half o’clock. So I’ve half an hour until meeting Matt. Good, it’s plenty of time. I’ll just wrap up my work here and then I’ll head out to his place.

This alleyway should provide an efficient shortcut to Matt’s block… “Give me all your money!”

I turn around at the sudden and loud demand and find a presumably homeless man wielding a switchblade. This guy... he doesn’t know what he’s in for. Ha! Mugging me of all people? It’s almost as bad as trying to rob Daredevil. What’s wrong with people these days, anyway?

“Keep walking man, find someone else to bug.” I’m confident that my tone sounded disinterested enough for the man to back off immediately. Either I was wrong or he’s way too dumb to follow simple instructions. The man snarls defiantly and steps forward, the knife clutched tightly by his left side. Oh well, here it goes again.

He lunges in my direction and I dodge him easily, he’s way too drunk to be doing this. As he passes next to me, I trip him with one of my feet. He falls, face-first, in the most unceremonious way possible. What an idiot. The dude manages to get up, sporting a nasty cut on top of his right eyebrow. He swings the switchblade in my direction, failing to cut me every time. This is so easy that it’s borderline boring.

I duck to avoid a swing aimed at my face and, in an advantage of our disposition, punch him in the gut, effectively blowing off the air in his lungs. Before I can completely retract my arm into safety again, the blade slashes a cut through my right palm. I hiss at the pain that the wound elicits, but I don’t get distracted for too long. Hooking a leg behind one of his, and pushing him backward with a hand flat on his chest, I make him fall on his ass. While his four limbs flail around, the guy trying to regain his bearings, I punch him right in the middle of the face. His nose breaks with a satisfactory crack and starts spilling blood all over the fucker’s face and t-shirt front. He gasps one last time, cries out in pain, and blacks out completely on the dirty ground of the alley. That’s what you get for messing with me, bitch!

Looking at my hand makes me consider for a brief moment if it’s worth the trouble of patching it immediately, but a shake the thought away once that I look at my phone. I’ve ten minutes left, so I’ll take care of it in Matt’s apartment. Before I go, I’ll take with me the douche’s switchblade. He doesn’t deserve it (since he can’t even use it fucking properly), and it’ll come in handy for any future events such as this one.

Walking through the rest of the alley, a stray cat comes out from under a dumpster to greet me. I crouch down to pet him a little; he looks clean enough to do so, after all. What kind of animals does Matt like? Is he a cat person or a dog person? Maybe he doesn’t like animals at all.

I arrive at Matt’s building entrance with three minutes left, which is the amount necessary for me to go up the stairs to his door. What a great timing indeed.
By the time that I reach his door and I’m about to knock on it, he swings it open and steps aside so I can enter. Matt greets me kindly, telling me to sit on the couch while he gets me something to drink. Such a gentleman he is. I wonder why he asked me to come.

After rummaging in the kitchen for a minute or two, he settles two glasses of tap water on top of the coffee table and sits down next to me at my left side. “How was your day?” He asks politely and with a charming smile plastered on his face. It’s an honest one; like he’s really happy about something. Could that be the fact that I’m here, or maybe is in relation with whatever reason he had to ask me to meet him? We shall discover it soon enough.

“Good, very good; it has been a smooth afternoon. What about you?” I leave out the part of the hobo attack, he doesn’t need to worry. I would hate to ruin his happiness right now. Later, once I know why I’m here, I’ll ask him if I can borrow his first aid kit. For now, I want to concentrate on him alone.

Matt’s lips twitch in distaste and annoyance, the rest of his face remains impassive. He knows that I’m not telling him something. “My day was fine. We managed to come up with a good defense for our client and I got something for you.” He’s beaming like a toddler who is about to show his latest drawing to his parents. Can someone literally die from a cuteness overload?

“Hey, that’s great! I mean the case thing. But anyway, what you got for me?” I’m half excited and half embarrassed; I like gifts, but they make me feel guilty and like I own something to the person that gives me the present. Matt’s smile turns into a smirk, the sly one that says “I know something you don’t”. He sits back and spreads his arms over the backrest of the couch. So this is Matt “Smug” Murdock…interestingly hot.

“First, you’ll have to tell me what happened to your right hand. And after you bandage it, I’ll give you your birthday present.” Matt’s clearly trying to hide his rage (towards whoever did this to me) with cockiness, but now that I know him so well I’m able to read him better. He’s awful at trying to hide his anger. The jaw twitch always gives him away. An attempt to distract him could result in him getting more pissed at me than at the culprit, but because I’m stupid I still have to try.

“You got me a birthday present? Matt! You shouldn’t have; I mean, the kiss was more than enough.” His face darkens considerably, like a hailstorm about to unleash frozen Hell on Earth. I shut up immediately and give up on my change of subject. “It’s nothing, really, just a drunken asshole who tried to mug me. I’m fine, this is just a little scratch that I got by pure unluckiness. In retaliation I left him knocked out cold and with a broken nose, he had it coming for messing with me, the little bitch…” I stop before I get more upset at the whole affair, it’s not worth it.

Rage and contempt flash through Matt’s face for a second before he composes himself. He puts on his expressionless mask again and carefully takes my right hand in his. Such a sweetheart he is. The pads of his fingers ever so slightly trace the borders of the wound. His lips and brows furrow in worry for a moment but then his face settles in a mix of concern and relief. He gets up and swiftly walks to his bathroom, retrieving the kit and carrying it to the small table in front of the couch.

Matt takes his seat at my side once more and opens the kit. I reach my left hand to the open case so I can grab disinfectant, but he stops me. “I don’t think you can do a great job with your left hand when you’re right-handed, Mackenzie. Let me do it instead,” he says taking my hand and resting it on his lap; goddamn. “May I?” He asks softly and I melt on the inside, only being able to nod in return.

He takes out the bottle of disinfectant, a needle and a thread, and bandages. He starts applying the disinfectant and I hiss at the burn; damn that son of a bitch. Matt makes a shushing noise, threads the needle and starts stitching the gash. I was wrong, this is worse; fuck a duck on a dock! I bite my lip.
in order to not scream from the pain. Okay, being shot ain't better, but enduring being stitched is no piece of cake either. My hand twitches in reflex a couple of times, but Matt’s iron grip keeps it steady. “It’s okay, it’ll be over soon.”

“Could you at least tell me what you brought me so I can distract myself with something else to think aside from the pain?” Matt smiles faintly but says nothing. He’s not spilling then. Shoot.

It feels like forever until Matt finishes patching up my hand. Despite being blind, he did a neat job; better than my previous one on him at least. What a show-off. I move my hand and fingers, assessing how much it hurts. It isn’t too bad thankfully. Very well, now it’s time for my gift!

“There, all done, how does it feel?” Matt puts everything back in the box and closes it, taking it back to where it belongs in the bathroom. I wish I belonged here too.

“Fine, I’ll survive. So, about that present…” I start coyly; things such as gift always make me self-conscious. He grins and goes to his bedroom. I wait patiently on the couch, imagining what it can be. A million of ideas cross my mind, but I can’t choose one, there are too many possibilities. He re-emerges with a box covered in wrapping paper with a bow on top of it. Oh my God, did he wrap it himself? That’s adorable.

“Here, after the other day, I could not resist. I hope you’re able to use them despite your injured hand.” He hands me the box and I try to unwrap it carefully. After the third attempt, I give up and shred the paper to pieces. I feel sorry for Matt’s hard work going to waste, but I really don’t have the patience needed. I want to see what’s inside, now!

Discarding the paper aside, I open the box and I’m left speechless. This is amazing, truly unbelievable. Matt brought me ballet shoes. They’re beautiful. They’re not even used, they’re brand new. How did he manage to afford them? It escapes me completely, especially since they’re not the regular pink kind. They’re all black, ribbon included. I put them back in the box and, with tears at the corner of my eyes, get up to hug him in the most crushing way possible. “Thank you so much, Matt!” I almost scream, probably deafening him.

Matt returns the hug with the same warmth and familiarity. I protest when he pull me away from him, even if is just a couple of inches. He strokes one of my cheeks and leans in to give me a peck on the lips, way too fast and brief for me to really enjoy it. When he breaks the contact I stand on the tip of my toes so I can reach his lips and kiss him more passionately, wanting to express my immense gratitude. He doesn’t let me, though. Matt’s arms leave my body and he moves to the couch. I’m left standing, still quite baffled by the whole ordeal. As I turn, I catch the wide grin decorating his features. He’s so incredibly gorgeous.

When I finally regain my bearings, I sit on the couch again, next to him. He takes the shoes in his hands, feeling them until the last little detail. They look so small in his big hands. Matt hands them to me with kind of a pleading smile. I stare confused at him for a moment, not getting what he means. “You said that if you could, you would dance. I thought that you meant that you were out of practice, but it was actually that you didn’t have the appropriate footwear. Well, it wasn’t a joke when I said that I wanted to see you dance.”

My eyes glaze over as I stare amazed at him. He deserves nothing short of perfection. I haven’t danced in years, I must be really rusty, but I’ll still try my best. I just need some music and to remember some of the basic moves, the rest I can improvise. “Do you have anything I can use to plug my phone and put some music?”

“Only my computer, unfortunately; I hope it does the job anyway.” He gets up to search for it while I take my boots off and change into the beautiful shoes. I’ll never use them for anything else besides
dancing for him. He gave them to me for that lone purpose. Matt comes back with his computer in hand and hands it to me. I fumble a little to get everything set right, but after a couple of minutes, it’s ready. Just one thing left: warm up.

“What are you doing?” Asks Matt a bit confused and amused at the same time. I look back at him and see the smile playing on his face. He’s such a cutie pie.

“Warming up, of course, otherwise all my muscles will be sore after I dance. I could injure myself too if I don’t stretch accordingly.” He makes a face akin to fascination, smiling broadly. “Okay, let’s do this.” I push the “play” key and music starts flooding through the entirety of the apartment.

***Matt’s point of view***

Soft and entrancing music starts to play, a female voice resounds in every corner. Music at this volume should be bothersome to me, but the tranquil and quiet melody is kind of enjoyable. Mackenzie stands up on the tip of her toes, aided by the ballet shoes which provide the support needed. She spins one, two and three times, moving across the room with each.

*You are an obsession

*I cannot sleep

*I am your possession

*Unopened at your feet

*There’s no balance

*No equality

*Be still I will not accept defeat

She dances with the lightness of a feather, unbothered by the weight of her body and the pull of the Earth’s gravitation force field. Mackenzie twirls and slides from one side to the other, making her way through the floor.

*Like a butterfly

*A wild butterfly

*I will collect you and capture you

Kenzie comes considerably close to me, moving in the narrow space between the couch and the coffee table. I think for a moment that she’ll collide with my legs, which block her path. Instead, I
sense a leg coming up and swiftly passing over my head; like it was drawing an arch. Her boldness stuns me for a second, but I feel her other leg doing the same thing while she spins right in front of me. This time, her calf grazes the top of my hair like the softest of breezes. That’s definitely not accidental.

You are an obsession
You’re my obsession
Who do you want me to be
To make you sleep with me

She continues her improvised dance (I can gather this much from the lack of coherence between her movements) in front of the window. Her arms move in synchrony, from her shoulders to her pinky fingers. It’s truly a mesmerizing show.

You are an obsession
You’re my obsession
Who do you want me to be
To make you sleep with me

Mackenzie jumps over the coffee table and I tense for a moment, thinking that she won’t make it, but she narrowly avoids hitting it. With a sigh of relief, I keep my attention on her dance. It’s easy to follow her trail since the shoes are quite noisy against the wooden floor, distinguishable even above the music.

You’re my obsession

The music starts to fade, forcing Kenzie to eventually stop her spins, and I break out of the trance I fell in.

You’re my obsession

All I can say with certainty is that when she dances, it’s like witnessing a whole new Mackenzie. Her usually shy demeanor is switched for a more confident one, kind of the same as when she fights. It’s not like I prefer one or the other, but I’m happy to see that she’s not a one-dimensional person.
***Mackenzie’s point of view***

I come to a stop after the fifth twirl, as the song ends. It’s one of my favorites; I used to watch this series about a ballerina who struggles with her new life in New York and the American Ballet Company where she dances. The song I danced to is from the opening and thankfully is a short but sensual one. Perfect for what I had in mind. It’s slow and deconstructed melody is easy to improvise to, making it useful for a dancer out of practice like me. Also, the lyrics mean a lot to me (you can imagine why…).

Matt seems pretty amazed by my performance, smiling goofily at me. I wipe the sweat gathering in my forehead while I try to steady my breaths. Wow, that was exhausting, I need to sit down. Slumping down on the couch, next to him, I sigh deeply in appreciation of the soft and comfortable furniture beneath me. He, instead, gets up and goes to the kitchen to withdraw something from the fridge. I sit up and reach for my glass of water only to notice its absence. Turning back to the kitchen I see it on the counter, where Matt is throwing in some ice cubes. It’s really hot in here, isn’t it? I haven’t noticed before.

When he comes back, he hands me the cold glass and I gulp down its content. Oh, how refreshing. He sits down in his spot next to me and takes a sip from his own glass. My feet hurt like hell, a normal consequence if we consider that I haven’t danced in years, but I couldn’t care less. Matt is happy, so I’m happy as well. “So, what do you think? Did you like it?”

Matt’s left hand comes up to my cheek and strokes it a few times; then, he leans in and gives me the sweetest of kisses. Both of my hands rest on his rock hard chest, gripping tightly as the kiss intensifies. Meanwhile, his hands wrap securely around my lower back. Somehow, in the middle of our heated exchange of saliva, I ended up sitting in Matt’s lap (yeah, I don’t know either). He doesn’t seem annoyed by this; au contraire, it appears to encourage him more. His hands hold my hips with a vice-like grip and ground me against his own. Is this leading to what I think it is…?

I gasp for air, finding the current amount in my lungs insufficient. Holy cow, this is so worth dying of asphyxiation for! Matt gently bites my bottom lip, pulling it in between his teeth, as a sign of wanting admission into my mouth. I grant it gladly, parting my lips so he can slip his tongue inside. This is so erotic, but in a sweet way (how does that even work?).

After a moment longer of tongues dancing around and hips grinding against each other (which I don’t know how well will sit with Matt), he breaks the kiss. I sit more comfortably on his lap and take a good look at him. His lips are red and swollen; his gasps are uneven; his eyes appear unfocused, with the pupils dilated. I wasn’t aware, during the kiss, that my hands didn’t stay perched on his neck all the time. It would seem that they took a trip over his hair and left quite a mess in there. He looks better than I thought with all his hair disheveled. If he lets me, I’ll ravish him right here right now.

“Yes, I loved it.” Matt finally answers; although I’m not sure if he’s referring to the dance or the kiss, maybe both. “I’m really looking forward to watching more of your…dancing skills.” There are two words “wrong” in his sentence; and one which is way too suspicious. I mean, that pause before ‘dancing’ gives me the impression that he’s either not talking about dancing at all or not completely. Could my little show of lifting my legs over his head be a bit too much?

“Well, if you want to I’ll do it again. Only this time, I would like to take some time to get something together so I can stop abusing my poor improvisation skills. Give me a couple of days and I might
come up with a decent choreography for a longer song.” Matt smiles, pleased with his accomplish at getting what he wants. Am I spoiling him or nah?

“Deal.”

Four days it took to put together the damn choreography. It’s kind of a miracle considering how out of practice I was. For it, I chose one of my favorite songs from one of my most hated movies from one of my most enjoyed books. I always imagined that the song would be perfect for ballet dancing. As it turns out, I was right. It was hard to translate into physical movements in the real world the steps and moves that I saw in my head, but I managed nevertheless. I think that Matt will like it.

Now that I’m ready to show him what I’ve been preparing, I only need to head out to his place. It’ll be better if I don’t tell him and just drop by unannounced, that way it remains a surprise. Not like he’s doing anything important right now. Matt’s probably out of work and it’s still too early to go out as Daredevil, so he must be chillin’ at home.

Deciding that waiting until dark it’s my better option at getting out without my mom, or the jackass of her husband, catching me in the midst of it, I stay in my bedroom reviewing once more everything that I need for tonight. The advantage of going this late at night (still not the ‘Daredevil beginning of patrol’ hour) is that my highly sensual dance could lead to something else after I finish. And of course, afterward, I would sleep with Matt until tomorrow morning. Sounds perfect, doesn’t it?

Okay, it’s dark enough, time to get out on the streets! I know he wants to take things slow (and that’s exactly the reason why nothing happened the other day after I danced for him), but tonight might be the night, my dear friend. He clearly wanted to give in before, I mean, I could feel him beneath me while I was sitting on his lap. But I believe that the whole Catholic thing is holding him back by the collar. Matt feels kind of guilty; he thinks he’s sinning by being with me. I don’t blame him, he’s ten years older than me, and the fact that he developed feelings for me while I was underage doesn’t help either. Still, he swore to never push me away.

The fresh air of the spring breeze hits me on my way to Matt’s apartment. It’s a bit chilly but nice at the same time; helps clear my head and boost my self-esteem. I have the feeling that tonight’s going to be great!

My hand has mostly healed by now. Soon it’ll be only a ghastly white scar representing a memory of good times. I’m not talking about the hobo assault; I mean what ensued after that incident. I still can’t believe that Matt gave me those ballet shoes. They’re definitely my favorite possession. They’re number five in my list of most beloveds. The other four are my mom, Matt, Foggy and Karen, in that respective order.

The lone bad thing about Manhattan (not mentioning all the real bad things about it) is that you can’t see more than ten or so stars in the night sky, even when there’s no cloud to be seen. On the other side, it’ll make my job easier, since I plan to have a roof-date with Matt at some point of our new relationship. I want to sit on a blanket or something, during a warm summer night, and tell him everything about all the stars that my sight can reach (even when I don’t know jack shit about any of them).

Just from thinking of all the possibilities we can choose from for a date, it makes me shiver with eagerness. I want to give him everything that I’ve to offer, even things that I don’t (damn, I’ll give
him the moon if he asks for it. Well, at least I’ll try to). Now that I properly ponder on it, it all happened so fast, like, one day we’re friends and the next we’re together. How crazy is that?

Okay, fine, I know I’m rambling, but I’m still flabbergasted about all of this (yes, I really like that word, is awesome). So, like I was narrating before, I’m walking through the Kitchen in the dead of night. You’ll think that it would be plagued with crime, and criminals, waiting at every corner…but it isn’t. Well, not at every corner. Of course, there’s still some illegal business going on, just less than one would assume. Daredevil took care of pretty much all of Hell’s Kitchen night beasts. If it weren’t for him, I would’ve probably been mugged twice, kidnapped, and killed on my way to Matt’s house. Yeah, all of those things, consecutively. Thank God for the Devil.

Sorry, not sorry if I’m boring you with my internal debate, I haven’t had the chance to think everything through for a long while now. From time to time you need to take a moment to assess what’s going on in your life and if you’re happy with how things are. It helps to improve your lifestyle, decide rightly when you have to make a choice, and most importantly, be content with the journey you’re traveling. No one wants to take a road they don’t like.

So, I stop everything else that I’m doing and reflect upon my recent and past actions. Am I satisfied with what I did or said? Could I’ve done more or express myself differently? These are the kind of question that assaults me at night when I go to sleep, and I hate them, but I understand their necessity. Do you go through the same thing? This pseudo-self-evaluation, to know what the heck is that you’re doing with your own life? If so, I hope that you’re better at it than I am. It sucks, so let’s suck it up together. You and me, pals for life (only if you want to, of course, not trying to force my presence in your life or anything).

Anyhow, we’re here, finally arriving at Matt’s apartment. That took longer than I thought. Let’s see if I can still climb up using the fire escape stairs. I haven’t done this in a while, so I hope I don’t fall and break my neck. Should be quite easy though-Oh uh.

Do you want the good news first or the bad ones? Okay, negative news it is then. Upon stepping on the first set of stairs (and because last night drizzle left everything wet) I slipped, fell to the ground and passed out. Yes, totally pathetic of me, no need to mention it. I woke up cold, sore and almost drowning in pain. Although with great cost, I managed to get up and climb the goddamn stairs once and for all.

Right now I’m going through the rooftop door, trying to not wake up Matt and alarm him. This was supposed to be a surprise after all. Guess my incompetence ruined it. Is fine, I’ll brush it off after a warm shower. Then I’ll be ready to make him breakfast and dance for him afterward. Unfortunately, there won’t be time for anything more than that, since Matt’s got to go to work. It’ll still be worth it.

Hm, will Matt find it sexy or cute that I use the shoes while doing breakfast? Because, knowing him, I expect that he'll get up before I finish it. It won’t hurt to try. I better sit down on the couch to do…Is that a blouse? What the hell is a female’s clothing piece (that ain’t mine) doing here? It could be Karen’s, but it doesn’t seem her style. And I don’t think she would forget it either. There’s only one other woman who would visit Matt at his house. Oh God, it can’t be…

Walking tentatively to Matt’s bedroom, I pray all the way over to the door that I’m fucking wrong about my guessing. I open the sliding door ever so slowly, dreading what I might find inside. Close your eyes and take a deep breath, Mackenzie, there’s no need to freak out. Matt would never cheat
on me.

Or he would.

And he did.

Claire’s on his bed.

Her clothes are lying on the floor.

All. Of. Them.

Why? Why did I do to deserve this? Why did you have to do this Matt?! I thought you loved me!!!

Matt’s eyes open and blink a couple of times, groggily. He looks in my direction and instantly wakes up. Fuck you, Murdock! I believed in what you said, I believed in what you told me about your feelings! I honestly believed that they were real. Before he can get up I get the hell out of the apartment, leaving behind the shoes he gave me. You can keep them, Matthew; I don’t want anything from you! You can go die and rot in Hell for all I care, you fucking asshole!

Fuck this shit, I’m off for good. I won’t see him ever again this time, I promise. Yes, I know I said the same thing last time, but now I freaking mean it. I’m done, so utterly done. Seems like I was asking for it, right? The most idiotic thing I’ve done in my life. Of course, he doesn’t love me, why would he? It was just a perverted fantasy he wanted to fulfill. Or maybe it wasn’t, but he thought better about it and decided that I was not worth the trouble. Anyway, it ends with me brokenhearted and with Matt happy in the arms of someone else.

I don’t know where I’ll go, just somewhere, anywhere; not home, that’s for sure. I’m not in the mood to take shit from the thrash that is my stepfather. I’ve enough assholes in my life as of right now. Having already dealt with one’s bullshit I don’t want to deal with another’s. Foggy and Karen aren’t reliable options either. There’s surely a place where I can stay away from everybody.

My mother will be pissed, but no matter how much I love her and I care for her, right now is about me. I need time to think and figure things out; most importantly, time to get my shit together and walk forward with my crappy life. Maybe I’ll just kill myself and end the pain that way. It’ll be better for everyone if I’m gone.

*** Matt’s point of view***

Mackenzie has been gone for a few days now. After she saw me with Claire she didn’t go home or anywhere else she usually frequents. Her mother, Foggy, and Karen are as worried as I am. The only difference is that they don’t feel as guilty as I do. They don’t know why she left either. I could tell Foggy and Karen, but not her mother. It would only make things worse, and Mackenzie’s hate for me would grow until the no return point. I fucked up big time, for real.

The thing with Claire was just a distraction. I’m an asshole for hurting two of the people I care about the most, but I couldn’t think of another way to divert my feelings for Mackenzie. I love her, but it’s wrong. If only I could mend this somehow…

I better start looking for her everywhere. She probably didn’t leave Hell’s Kitchen, so if I search at night while on patrol it might be easier. It’s something.
As I mentioned before, some of the references you can find in this chapter belong to 50SOG (including the song that Kenzie uses for the choreography she puts together, which is Earned It by The Weeknd); Pink Floyd lyrics (a verse from Waiting for the Worms); Pokémon (yes, and it's very effective); and the song that Mackenzie dances to the first time is Obsession by Karen O, which is the theme song of the mini-series Flesh and Bone (it's also the series she refers to, about the ballerina who struggles with her life in NY and the ABC). If you like ballet and drama, I recommend it.

About the introduction of Matt's POV, I used it because I don't really know anything about ballet, and I thought that it would be too complicated to describe it from Kenzie's POV. The last part, which is also narrated by Matt, was so we know that he's worried about Kenzie's disappearance (since she left and hasn't got in touch with anybody, she couldn't know what Matt's thinking and thus WE wouldn't know either).

Anyway, I hope that you enjoyed this chapter despite the drama going on (I know, another dramatic cliffhanger. What can I say? I'm a drama queen after all). I've no idea when I'll be updating again so please be patient with me. Thank you for reading and let me know what you think or if you find any errors that a missed.
Save me from myself

Chapter Summary

"'Wake me up when September ends...'

You're still there? After all what happened? You must be a sadist then because things are only going to get worse."

Chapter Notes

I'm so friggin' sorry!!! I know, I know, it's been 2 months and 6 days, I KNOW. I'm sorry, I really am, but since I started studying I haven't got a lot of free time as I used to. It's not easy to write when you have other things to attend to and inspiration seems to escape your grasp. But like I said before, I'm NOT going to abandon this fic, that I swear.

Cutting straight to the chase, this chapter doesn't contain any drama or romance, it's graphically bloody. So, if you don't want to read about blood everywhere and our beloved protagonist being in the midst of it, wait for the next chapter.

This one is short in comparison to the previous ones but it's packed with gut clenching violence. You've been warned.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Life alone ain’t bad. It’s no paradise, if you know what I mean, but is way better than having to deal with him; that cheating asshole that took my feelings and threw them away like trash. He can go fuck himself for all I care (although, from what I know, he’s probably fucking Claire). I’m not mad at her, most likely she didn’t know anything about what was going on between Matthew and me (I’m not calling him ‘Matt’ anymore, deal with it). Besides, who would say 'no' to that guy? No, the fact that I wish him death, sort of, doesn’t mean that I’m not recognizing his handsomeness. He’s a jerk, but a hot one.

You might be wondering where I am as of right now; where I’ve been staying this past week since I left Murdock’s apartment. Well, I can’t tell you the exact location, that’ll have to remain a secret so no one finds out my hiding spot. All I’m willing to say is that it’s an abandoned warehouse; yeah, the kind that criminals like so much. You can say that it’s dangerous because I could come across some thugs or mobsters; or even worse, Daredevil himself. If he finds me, it won’t be pretty.

I keep getting texts and calls from him, but I ain’t answering them; like hell I would. Good thing my phone is an outdated one, so it can’t be tracked. The only reason why I brought it with me is in the case of an emergency, also in the case that my mom tries to reach me. Even after leaving a note
for her when I went home to gather some things, she still calls me constantly. Sometimes I don’t pick up, but I can’t do it forever, otherwise she’ll die from worry. Still, I haven’t told her my whereabouts or when I’m returning home; just that I’m safe and that I’ll eventually go back. She insisted in that I tell her what prompted this decision, but I’m not spilling. This is between Murdock and me.

So far it’s been quite peaceful in here, but I guess that was expected. In my time stalking Daredevil I came across a lot of warehouse and factories, dotting which were regularly used and which weren’t. At a time like this, it became handy to have this knowledge, so I’m kind of thankful for having followed him through half the Kitchen. Although, if I hadn’t I wouldn’t be in this situation, to begin with.

If you’re asking from where or how I get food I can tell you that I had some money saved, so I’m buying with that. The probability of me going home because I don’t have any money left is bigger than doing it ‘cause I want to. It should last me for another week at least since I don’t really eat that much. Talking about this, it’s a miracle that I haven’t crossed paths with anyone that I know when I go out to do some shopping at the nearest grocery store. It might seem as a plain coincidence, but the warehouse I’m staying in isn’t that far away from Murdock’s place. I honestly can’t understand how he hasn’t found me yet. Maybe he isn’t even looking for me. Now that he has Claire, why would he even bother to do so?

Hey, what was that? I heard a loud noise just now, like a tube falling to the floor or something. Well, I saw a couple of rats before, so it might be that. Nothing to worry about-

“I told you, it’s completely abandoned, no one comes here anymore. It’s perfect for conducting our businesses.” A strangely familiar voice says. Where did I hear it before? It sounds just like…is the guy that shot me! He’s with someone else. What the hell are they doing here? Oh uh. If they want to use this for something, I better get the hell out of here as soon as I can. “What the fuck is that?”

Shit, they saw my things, what do I do now? Fuck it, I’ll leave everything here and come back later when they’re gone. I can’t risk being caught by them, especially now that I’m on “bad terms” with Murdock. There’s no way he’ll come to my rescue. He’s busy with more important things. All I need to do is sneak out quietly…

*BANG*

Fuck.

“Hey, you! What the hell are you doing here, stupid brat?!” Fucking hell, they saw me. If the fucker recognizes me I’m done for. “I know you; I’ve got beaten up really bad because of you!” Seriously? He doesn’t only remember me, but he also recalls that I was saved by the Daredevil? You’ve got to be fucking kidding me. I can’t believe my luck right now. More importantly, this is my cue to get the hell out of here before they get their hands on-“Fucking get her!” Well fuck.

The two goons start running in my direction as I try to bolt out. When did they get so fast? More so, when did I get so slow? Unluckily for me, in the middle of my frantic escape, I don’t realize that I’m running directly into a jammed door. I scanned the place beforehand in light of this kind of situation, so I could know which route of escape to use. Ironically, it turns fucking useless at this very moment because I’m stupid. Shit, I’m going to be beaten to a pulp.

Pushing the door with all my strength turns out to be fruitless since it won’t bulge. For Christ sake, not right now! A few days back I’ve got my heart broken, I don’t need my legs to be broken too. I look around frantically, searching for another way out. There’s none cleared near me. If I want to get away from them, I need to pass them somehow. Shit, too late.
The asshole that shot me closes in on me, smiling triumphantly like I was some kind of prize he just won. It makes me sick. I go for the switchblade in my back pocket, but before I can get a hold of it the two morons jump on me. One of them grabs my arms behind my back while the other grips my short hair between his filthy fingers. I snarl and spit in his face, concealing my fear with arrogant boldness. I won’t give them the pleasure of seeing me scared, even if I’m pissing my pants. The idiot leader doesn’t take this well and punches me in the gut, knocking the air out of me. I gasp, trying to refill my lungs with oxygen and get up to put up a fight, but it’s already too late and he kicks my head. Before I can react, everything goes to black.

My head’s spinning out of control and I can’t see shit. What the hell happened? Where the fuck am I? Please, tell that the stupid monkeys didn’t take me with them for whatever shadowy reasons they had. Since my eyes are covered with what I suppose is a piece of cloth, I try to refine my hearing until I can listen to something clear. Too bad for me, the room is completely silent. The only sound I can hear is that of a running rat in a corner somewhere, disgusting. If I thought it couldn’t get any worse…

The sudden opening and consecutive clashing of a door against a wall startles me. Here I was, enjoying the quiet when these morons had to come and disrupt it, goddammit. A cacophony of footsteps invades the room and I tense up in anticipation. It’s not just the idiot and his goon; it’s the whole fucking gang. I don’t know what they want from me, but I’m sure as hell that they won’t spare any methods to gain whatever it is they’re looking for. I’m not leaving unscathed anytime soon.

“Well, well, well, what do we have here? A little damsel in distress, it would seem.” Go fuck yourself, you fucking condescending piece of shit. That’s so fucking cliché it hurts my ears. I guess he’s the real leader of this group of asshats, but oh my God how lame he is. Like, seriously? Come on, man, make a fucking effort to appear menacing or something. “Are you comfortable my dear?” I’ll fucking cut you, bitch.

“Yeah, sure, now that someone’s finally here I can order room service.” What a dumbass. Whoever the guy is, doesn’t take this lightly and orders someone to slap me. You giant pussy! You can’t even do it yourself? You’re just a pathetic little bitch, with too much power in between his hands. It’s embarrassing to everyone else except himself, no self-awareness. “Can’t even do the dirty work yourself, huh?” A second slap opens up my upper lip, which starts bleeding profusely. Shit, I really like the shirt I’m wearing and it’s probably stained red by now, fucking idiot.

“You ain’t on a spa, sweetheart, you’re here to help us.” I swear it gave me chills when he called me that in that way. Ew. He’s surely a pervert of some kind. Anyway, what the hell can they want from me? I got nothing! I barely have any money and definitely no info- Oh, oh. Do they mean…? “You’ll tell us where we can find your little devilish friend.” Yeah, that’s what I thought.

“What if I don’t?” What am I saying? Why do I care to hold this information from them? After all that Murdock did to me, am I still gonna risk my life by trying to save him? He fucking deserves whatever is these guys want to do to him! I should tell them everything! Where he lives, how he looks like, what’s his name…But that won’t only endanger him. He deserves all the suffering and pain he put me through and more, but Foggy and Karen don’t; even Claire doesn’t either. If I open my mouth, they’ll get to them too, somehow.

“We’ll torture you until you speak of course.” Just so I make this clear enough, I’m doing this only for K&F, okay? Murdock can go fuck himself (we both know he deserves it). “So, will you
comply, or entertain us with your pleas for mercy?” I’ll rather die than ask for mercy, fucktard! Come at me, bitch!

“Do your best, I’ll do mine.” I spat a bit of blood that surged up my throat, in his general direction. Man, this must be what it feels like to be blind. Too bad that I ain’t got Murdock’s superpowers or whatever they are. Douche Leader seems to take in the challenge because he hits me square in the jaw. Not a slap; a firm punch. A little more of force and I would be lacking a couple of teeth.

“Deal. Get to work guys.” That can’t mean anything good, can it? Footsteps can be heard again, a single pair now. The sound of the cracking door disrupts the now reign silence once before this last is broken by a new rough voice.

“Who’s your friend in the red underwear?” The man cuts straight to the chase, bluntly asking about Murdock’s identity. He might be an asshole (well, he actually is one), but that doesn’t matter, it’s not reason enough to expose him like this. A part of me deeply wants to spill everything and see him suffer the consequences of betraying me, but at the same time I wish to be the better person. Why is this so fucking confusing?!

“First, it ain’t underwear; second, he’s a piece-of-shit-cock-sucking-asshole; and third, even if he is one, I won’t tell on him. If anyone is going to fuck him up, it’s me. So as long as it concerns me, you can go fuck yourself, bitch.” With a wide grin and a probably deranged looking face, I answer him without skipping a beat. I’m not lying; I’ll be the one to hurt that motherfucker bad. Sorry, I’m probably swearing way too much for your liking, I’ll try to keep it down a notch.

The answer isn’t taken very well by the morons who are in charge of interrogating me and it earns me a punch to the face. I hear a loud crack as a wave of pain washes over my nose and surrounding areas. Great, he fucking broke my nose. What I presume to be blood starts running down my lips and chin, staining, even more, my shirt. I’m gonna make them pay my laundry. “We can go all night long, bitch, so you better speak up if you wanna walk away on your own instead of in the back of an ambulance.”

I lick my lips, swallowing my own blood in a show of defiance. Good, I can go all night too, I think…Anyway, they’re not going to break me, I won’t allow it. The only one entitled to do that is Matt, even if I hate his guts (okay, I don’t hate him, but I really want to). Even if they kill me, what does it matter? What difference does it make? My life is already worthless, why do I even want to keep living at this point? I barely have a family, with an abusive stepfather and a mother who can only take care of herself thanks to the fucker she married; I only have two “friends”, since I can’t really count K&F as friends; and on top of that, the guy I fell for, the one who made me believe he returned my feelings, turns out to be a cheating and lying cunt. Seriously, what reasons do I have to live?! Fucking zero. So please, just go on and kill me, you’ll make me a favor. Maybe then I’ll finally find the peace I’m looking for. “Go ahead, break me, I don’t care anymore.”

The air in my lungs gets knocked out by a fist connecting with my stomach. I desperately gasp for air, trying to regain my bearings and compose myself. I might let them kill me, but that doesn’t mean I’ll go down pathetically. Some warm blood surges up my throat and I spit it out, feeling disgusted with the strong taste of iron. This won’t have a happy ending, that’s for sure. Unless Murdock comes barging in at the last second rescuing me from certain death. I just hope that if it does happen, it ain’t as cheesy as I think it could be.

“Let’s try this again, shall we, who the fuck is the Devil of Hell’s Kitchen?!” The guy punches me once again in the face, making me spit even more blood. Honestly, how much blood can I spit? Two more of those and I’ll get a tooth knocked down. Yeah, I’ll like to preserve my mouth as intact as I can, wouldn’t want an open casket funeral with some white pearls missing from my smile.
“Who knows?” I speak through bloodied teeth with a crazy smile. What I’m not sure about is if my insanity right now comes from before or it was inflicted by all those punches to my head. I probably got a concussion by now. If only my knight in shining armor came to swoop me up and carry me back to his castle…yup, definitely a concussion.

Silence fills the room for a moment as everyone goes still and quiet. It’s almost like they stopped to think what’s gonna be their next move or something. I relish in the calm before the storm and take in as much as I can from my surrounding everything. The air feels damp and smells like it as well, not uncommon for an abandoned warehouse. The only sound filtering is the low hum of distant cars rushing through the heart of the Kitchen and the high-pitched squeaks of some rats running somewhere in the room.

So far, most of my body hurts, be it because of the interrogation methods or my unhealthy lifestyle these past weeks. I still can’t see, since my blindfold hasn’t been removed. Every tiny bit of stimuli feels like a spark of information starting a fire through my senses. Maybe this is what Matt feels like all the time, but more accurate of course. I’ve got to say, the complete darkness is fucking terrifying. At least he’s got his “world on fire” or whatever that one is.

For the first time since I’m here I wiggle my hands a little to get a feeling of how much restricted they’re. I can’t believe I’m this fucking stupid. Damn, I deserve all of this just because I’m so slow. You could argue that I got distracted by all the pain inflicted on my person, but let’s be real, that’s not enough reason for not trying to get myself freed sooner. Still, all I can say is that even if I do pry my hands out of the bindings, there’s not much else I can do to escape. It’s not like I can beat these guys in a fist fight, and my switchblade wouldn’t be more helpful. If I were Daredevil, this would be a completely different story.

“That’s it; I’m done with you and your shitty attitude. If you don’t start giving us answers, I’ll force them out from you.” Genius! Nobody would’ve ever thought of that. It’s almost like you reinvented the wheel or something. Congratulations on making yourself look like a total dumbass, bitch. What the hell has been going on until now then? Because I don’t share your opinion about this tea party being too dull for your liking. And maybe that would have to do with the fact that this ain’t anything other than a fucking interrogation. Are you even here?

“If that’s what you’re going to do, then what the fuck have you been doing so far?” Like for real man, are you even trying here?

“Warming up.” To be honest with you, that statement just chilled me to the core. I really don’t want to know what he’s gonna do next. All I know is that it’s going to result in a lot of pain for me. Whoever is the thug that’s been in charge since the Bee Queen left circles around me and tugs at my restrained hands. He grabs one and squeezes it tightly before he holds onto a single finger, my middle one. I hear it before I feel it, a loud crack filling the otherwise quiet space enveloping us. A tidal wave of agonizing pain ripples through my arm all the way until I can almost feel it at the tip of my toes. Shit, this is bad, but fortunately not as bad as the other times that my bones broke or when I got shot. It’s still pretty painful, though.

Once that the feeling registers in my mind, I let out a searing scream. Maybe someone will hear it and call for help. Who am I kidding? Nobody walks near here. A couple of lonely tears make their way down my face against my will. Fuck, the last thing I want is to appear weak in front of them. Guess it’s too late to worry about that.

“How many more will I’ve to break before you tell us, two, three or all of them? It’s up to you brat.” I wish I could punch you in your teeth and leave you without any single one of them, you punk ass bitch! Like I’ll give in, I’ll rather die first. My hand is starting to feel numb, thank God. The
downside is that I can no longer try to get my hands out of the zip tie. Whatever, even if I use all my strength I’ll only hurt myself by making the plastic dig into the tender flesh of my wrists.

“Bitch, you can snap my neck for all I care. I’m done with you and your gang of faggy motherfuckers. Peace out.” I resign myself to a dark fate, trying to not fear death as I face it. There’s no way I’m getting out alive, so at least I’ll just try to find a happy place inside my mind while I leave my body to ship out to the vastness of the afterlife; if there’s any.

The zip tie gets cut and for a brief moment I think I made it and they’ll let me go. Too bad we don’t live in an ideal world, right? The man that freed my hands kicks the chair forward with me still sitting on it. I fall on my face, too dumbfounded to put my arms in front of me as a way to reduce the damage inflicted by the fall. A storm of kicks and punches come flying down my way, leaving no spot unattended. Everything hurts so much I can’t distinguish what belongs where any longer. My body is just one giant and tangled mess of agony. If they plan to kill me this way, I hope someone kicks my head hard enough for me to pass out or break my neck. All I want right now is to find peace again, even if it’s in somewhere else than Matt’s arms.

“Last chance bitch; who the hell is Daredevil?” Somehow he manages to finish the sentence and get interrupted as well. How? I don’t fucking know. What I can venture about is that, for an unknown reason, something is making them relent. Right now I feel fewer fists and feet aimed at me, like if someone was pulling the goons off of me. Maybe I got a guardian angel or some shit. As the violence stops coming in my direction, it starts spreading other ways. All that I can listen to is the sound of bones being broken and bodies hitting the floor, one by one. Oh, how satisfying it is to hear. Thank you, whoever you are, you just saved my…

I’m still wearing the blindfold, even while having my hands released. I’m tempted to lift it and find out what the hell is going on, but I can’t conjure the energy to do so. It might sound stupid (knowing that I have a piece of cloth covering my eyes and blocking all forms of light that could reach them), but I feel like a different sort of darkness is clouding my sight. To put it simply, I think I’m blacking out. And somehow, I’m sure it’s not good. I’ve to resist it or I might not wake up ever again. It’s a fact that I’m bleeding out. Somehow, in the middle of the “punch-Kenzie-like-she-were-a-piñata fest” one of them stabbed me in a place I can’t pinpoint right now. My entire body is starting to feel numb and cold, like if I were about to die. I probably am. Well, my life has been tragically beautiful while it lasted.

The yelling and grunting of the fight going on around me come to an abrupt stop. Finally, Jesus Christ, I wanna get some sleep for fuck’s sake, even knowing it’ll be eternal. Only one sound is breaking the sudden calmness of the room, and it’s ragged panting. Someone is out of breath, probably the person that has beaten the shit out of the gang of retards. Good for him, or her.

The echo of footsteps getting closer fills the quiet atmosphere and for a slight second I start to panic and try to move out of the way of whoever is coming to where I am. Pain courses through my body and I scream once again, lying as still as I can to not elicit another tidal wave. I’ve enough suffering for today; or my entire life, for that matter.

“Mackenzie…?” A low whisper tentatively calls my name but I can no longer give an answer. I’m too tired and drained of energy to even speak. The voice keeps muttering over and over again, getting closer with every breath I try to take. It’s painful, but it’s the only thing grounding me right now. Two gentle hands turn me around, leaving me with my back against the wet floor. It doesn’t take a genius to figure out that I’m soaking in my own blood. Great, just fucking great. Can I die now, please, so nothing else matters anymore?

“It’s okay, everything is going to be alright, stay with me, Mackenzie.” The voice sounds a little
frantic now, almost pleading. It must be someone that I know since I recognize his voice, but I can’t quite place who it belongs to. My mind is so foggy I can barely think straight. One of the hands puts pressure on my knife wound to stop the bleeding and I scream at the pain it causes, but nothing comes out of my mouth, only a pathetic gasp for air. At some point my blindfold gets tugged off of my face and light comes flooding from everywhere, almost blinding me for real. I wriggle around, trying to turn away from the source of the offending light to no avail.

After a couple of minutes, my eyes regain their focus and I can see my surroundings through a blurry lens. There’s a man crouching down in front of me, wearing some kind of dark red and black suit that covers everything except the lower half of his face. Why does this ring a bell in my head? It’s like I’ve seen him before…Daredevil. Yeah, he’s the one I was being interrogated for, it’s his fault that I’m dying, isn’t it? I’m so confused I don’t even know.

He scoops me up and carries me bridal style out of the warehouse, leaving a bunch of unconscious criminals behind. Still a total badass, Murdock, at the same time that a complete jerk. I won’t ever forget your betrayal, and you won’t buy my forgiveness easily either. But I’m glad that you came and I can see you one last time before I fall in the arms of death.

“About fuckin’ time Murdock.” My voice sounds so hoarse that I don’t recognize it as mine at first. I hear him chuckle softly, but it comes out more as a broken sob. Is he really feeling that guilty? Well, he should.

“I’m so sorry Mackenzie.” I don’t know exactly what he’s apologizing for, but I don’t care. It’s too late for him to be sorry now, and equally for me to forgive him. Not acknowledging that he spoke in the first place, I try to gather my thoughts to form something akin to a goodbye. It’s time now, I can feel it. The drowsiness is becoming greater as time goes by and the darkness is pulling me under with more strength that I’ve left inside of me to fight it off. All I’ve to do is close my eyes and give in to the temptation. It’s so easy to just let go…

“Mackenzie, wait, please, just a little longer and-” The engulfing void cuts him off. I can no longer see, hear or feel anything at all. The only thing left is the eerie quietness of the encompassing abyss that’s swallowing me while I die. At last, peace and calm. Forever.

Warmth and softness are what I fell around me. This must be heaven. I dare not to open my eyes in case I’m wrong and I wake up in hell. The sensation of grogginess still claims my body and mind, making it hard to stay conscious. I lick my dry lips and take a deep breath, almost tasting the smell of iron in the air. Blood, it’s mine? Why am I bleeding if I’m already dead? It doesn’t make any sense. My limbs feel rock hard and heavy when I try to move them. At first, I think that it’s because I’m chained to something, which would be logical being in Hell, somehow…

My mind is so fuzzy I can’t even comprehend my own thoughts; like they were someone else’s. There’s a sound coming from somewhere far away, low and rapid. I perk up my ears a bit and distinguish the noise as being a male’s voice talking to another person. Whoever’s talking is trying to keep it down unsuccessfully, since he’s speaking way too fast to be unheard.

“…Yes, she’s here-No, you’ve to come right away, she’s bleeding out…I know Claire! I tried to stop the hemorrhage but it’s not helping with the fact that she already lost a lot of blood. She needs to be stitched and you’re the only one I know that can help her.” He sounds so desperate, but I don’t know why or who he’s talking about. I hope he gets to save this friend of his.
“Claire—Just, listen to me! I can’t do this; it goes way beyond my knowledge and abilities. If I could I wouldn’t be calling you right now. Please, if she dies…it’s going to be my entire fault. I screwed up, but I got to fix this somehow and I can only begin to do it with your help.” Claire, that name sounds familiar for some reason. Did I know someone named like that back when I was alive? It feels like we didn’t get along, but maybe I’m getting things mixed up in my decadent state of mind.

“Yes, thank—Yeah, I know, thank you so much, Claire. I own you big time…Ye-yeah; I’ll do that while I wait, see you in a bit.” The voice grows quiet and I’m left with my jumbled thoughts once again. I still haven’t opened my eyes to see where I am. It’s quite scary, to be honest.

“Kenzie…?” The guy who was talking to the woman named Claire is speaking nearer this time. Who’s Kenzie? It feels like that’s my name or part of it. Is he talking to me? “Just hang on, okay? Claire is coming to help you right now, so you just have to wait a little longer. Can you do that?” What does he mean? She’s coming to help me? Why? I’m already dead, there’s nothing to help me with.

A hand caresses my right cheek softly; as if the guy is afraid of breaking me into a thousand pieces. Somewhere deep inside I feel like he could do that with less than his touch, but I’m not sure why. Everything goes silent again and the tugging sensation of emptiness reappears out of nowhere. I can’t resist it, even if I want to stay awake and see who my companion is.

Before the darkness reclaims my mind once more, I open my eyes slightly only to see a couple of dark eyes looking back at me. What a gorgeous face to see before fading into nothingness.

Chapter End Notes

Like Mackenzie said, things are only going to get worse, and then better, and then worse once again. Think of this fic as a rollercoaster in some sort of twisted way. I know this one is another dark cliffhanger, but don’t fret, we all know that our Kenzie is stronger than she seems.

Next chapter will be a little bit of a recess for the characters, and everything will be okay again until shit hits the fan, of course. All I'm going to say is that chapter 7 is the calm before the storm in this story.

As always, thank you so much for the patience, love, and support. And even if you're only reading, it means a great deal to me. If you want to comment something about the story plot-wise, character-wise or just writing-wise I'm all eyes for reading whatever you want to say. Thank you all once again and we'll "see" each other next chapter. ;D
Pick up my broken pieces

Chapter Summary

"Damn, it's been long since this whole shit show started! And look how far we've made it, pal. Ready to see where this is all going? Cause I'm sure as hell not."

Chapter Notes

I know, it's been a little bit over two years since my last upload. To everyone how has been waiting that long, or just waiting in general, I'm deeply sorry. There are no excuses. I got caught up with other projects, school, work and life in general. But rest assured, no matter how long I take to finish this story, I'll never abandon it.

This chapter is more toned down. A bit of drama first, but then it evolves in more of a romantic story than anything else. Just a little happiness before we all go back to suffering.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

***Matt’s point of view***

As soon as I close the rooftop door and carry Mackenzie down the stairs I lay her on the couch so I can search for some towels to stop the bleeding. If I don’t find something quickly she’ll bleed out before I can even call Claire. Kenzie hasn’t woken up again since we left the warehouse, which is quite worrisome. I just hope that it’s not too late.

I tie one of the towels around her belly to improvise a tourniquet of some sort. This should be enough to absorb the blood and put pressure to stop the bleeding. There’s so much blood that it’s starting to overflow my senses. I don’t think I have the stomach to pull through such amount of her blood. If it were mine I wouldn’t mind that much, but it’s Kenzie’s. And the fact that she’s bleeding out on my couch is entirely my fault.

What am I doing? I don’t have time to blame myself, not right now at least. Since the wound is covered and the hemorrhage is starting to relent I need to call Claire so she can come and start stitching Mackenzie’s wound shut. Being as careful as I can, I lift Kenzie up and move her to the bedroom, so she can rest more comfortably on the bed. Thankfully, I always carry my burner with me, so I don’t have to frantically look for it. I dial the number and wait for her to pick up. God, I pray that this is one of her nights off. After a moment, her tired and sleep heavy voice comes through the speaker.

“Please tell me you aren’t dying on your couch again”. Claire sounds exhausted and a bit irritated, although there’s still concern laced in her words. It wouldn’t help her situation, but I wish it was me
the one on the brink of death instead of Kenzie.

“Sorry, but it’s not me this time. I still need your help”. If this wasn’t such a serious problem, I wouldn’t be so direct with her. She doesn’t deserve to be treated like this, but I can’t waste more time than I already did. “It’s a friend of mine, she’s bleeding out”.

“What the hell happened? It’s usually you who ends up bloody and beaten. Is it Karen?” I’m not sure if she’s scolding me or just showing frustrated concern. I don’t have time to figure it out either.

“No, it’s not Karen, it’s–”

“Is it Mackenzie? Is she there with you? So did you find her?” Claire’s questions come faster than I can answer them. After Mackenzie’s disappearance, I told Claire about what happened to prompt that. We really haven’t spoken since then, until now. I tried to explain my reasoning –or lack thereof– to no avail. At first, she didn’t want to listen and I understood that, but after she calmed down she just left with a disappointed look on her face; or at least I think that’s what happened.

“…Yes, she’s here–”

“What happened? Was she mugged?” She’s interrupting me again, and normally I would patiently listen to her, but there’s no time for that now.

“No, you’ve to come right away, she’s bleeding out–”

“Then why haven’t you done something already? You just have to put pressure on the wound and stitch–” If this goes on like this, Mackenzie’s going to die.

“I know, Claire! I tried to stop the hemorrhage but it’s not helping with the fact that she has already lost a lot of blood. She needs to be stitched and you’re the only one I know that can help her”. I feel so useless for not being able to help Kenzie myself. I should be the one trying to save her; it’s my fault after all. But the cut is too deep and wide for me to try and stitch it successfully.

“How many times have you done it to yourself? It’s not that different–” I can’t have this argument right now.

“Claire– Just, listen to me! I can’t do this; it goes way beyond my knowledge and abilities. If I could I wouldn’t be calling you right now. Please, if she dies…it’s going to be my entire fault. I screwed up, but I got to fix this somehow and I can only begin to do it with your help”. Having hurt Mackenzie is something I can live with, barely, but I can still do it. If I don’t manage to save her…I can’t let that happen.

“I’ll be there in fifteen minutes. Keep track of her breathing and her heart beats, if any of those stops, apply any resuscitation tactics that you know”. Her tone is more professional than friendly, but all I care about is the fact that she said she’s coming.

“Yes, thank–”

“You better don’t make me go to retrieve a corpse, Murdock”. Claire speaks with a coldness to her voice, conveying how pissed she is by the whole situation.

“Yeah, I know; thank you so much, Claire. I owe you big time…”

“Of course you do. Now go to make sure that she didn’t die while you were on the phone”. She’s right; I’m wasting my time with all this pointless banter. Mackenzie needs my help, or at least my attention.
“Yeah, I’ll do that while I wait, see you in a bit”. Claire hangs up without saying goodbye, but I couldn’t care less. The more she spends talking with me the more she’ll take to get here.

I walk into my bedroom only to see that Mackenzie is regaining her conscience. She tries to move around a little but is unable due to her unresponsive body, which refuses to move. After suffering from such a blood loss, I’m impressed that she can even stay awake for more than a few seconds. She hasn’t opened her eyes yet and I guess it might be because she’s disoriented and doesn’t know where she is. There’s a chance that she might even be scared. If only I could do something to dissipate her fear. “Kenzie…?”

My quiet inquiry seems to spur her forward into waking up and regaining her bearings. She moves her head slightly, with her eyes still tightly shut. The sight is heart-wrenching. “Just hang on, okay? Claire is coming to help you right now, so you just have to wait a little longer. Can you do that?” My voice breaks a little despite my best efforts in keeping it steady. She doesn’t seem to acknowledge what’s going on, too immersed in whatever she’s thinking about.

Being extremely careful (as if I could break her if I press too hard), I caress her cheek in an attempt to soothe her confusion and pain. However, it appears that she’s falling unconscious once again. I think is better this way, she needs to gather as much energy as she can. She’ll need it.

I pull my hand away, only to sense her brown eyes flutter open for a second before sealing shut again.

***Mackenzie’s point of view***

Who would have thought that death could be so peaceful? It’s almost like I’m laying in a comfortable bed with silk bed sheets…Fuck, I’m not dead. I try to get up, but the second I move pain shoots through my entire body. My God, I never knew I had so many nerves. Jesus Christ, I might not be dead, but I will soon enough. There’s no way I can survive this much physical suffering. What’s ironic is that I don’t know which is worse, being in this condition or being in this place. Yes, I’m sporting a concussion, but I still know where I am. Murdock’s fucking apartment. I can’t believe it.

As soon as I open my eyes I’m greeted with the tall windows and what seems to be the afternoon light coming through them. How long have I been asleep? Shit, I barely remember what happened after I passed out back in the warehouse. I just hope I haven’t said or done something stupid while half-conscious. Oh my God, what if I told him that I forgive him or something?

I hear some noises coming from the kitchen, signaling that someone is coming my way (presumably Murdock). I’m not ready to deal with that asshole yet; I need more time to gather my thoughts. Now I’ll have to deal with his bullshit. If only I could bear the pain then I would get the hell out of here. The door slides open and he pops his head in. My murderer stare seems to go unnoticed by Murdock, who just looks like if he hasn’t done anything wrong. You wish, Matthew. He walks silently to no avail; he already knows that I’m awake, so why bother? “Mackenzie? Are you conscious?”

“You are so lucky right now that your superpowers don’t include telepathy, because if you could read my mind you wouldn’t find it pretty”. My tone is venomous, but with all the right to. He betrayed me; he fucking cheated on me. We weren’t in a relationship or something like that, but he made me believe we could be. There’s nothing crueler than that, not even killing someone. Damn,
you already know that I would prefer to die than to keep living like this.

“I know you’re upset…”

“Upset? Upset?! Really, Matt? Just fucking ‘upset’?! Are you fricking kidding me right now?! I’m not ‘upset’, I’m furious! One day you kiss me like there isn’t anybody else for you and the next you sleep with Claire, what the hell is wrong with you?! What did I do to make you do this to me? I don’t get it; I can’t understand your reasoning if there’s any at all. So please, enlighten me, tell me what I did wrong so at least I can know that it’s not because you just don’t like me”. I finish my rant with barely any air in my lungs. Damn, everything hurts in unpleasant ways and places. He looks so lost; like he doesn’t know what I’m talking about. Bullshit.

“Mackenzie, I can explain—” Is he for real?

“Explain? Oh my God, Matt, that’s the last thing you should say. That’s what everyone says when they cheat on someone. You make me believe even less that there’s another reason for you to do this than the simple fact that you don’t love me back. You’re a fucking lawyer; but let me tell you, you’re not making your case any better”. I would very much like to just drop dead.

“The reason it’s not what you’re thinking. If you would let me explain and tell you why I actually did that then you would understand. Or at least know for a fact that you didn’t do anything wrong”.

“So you really don’t feel the same, that’s what you’re saying right?” His shoulders are tense and his eyes keep darting from one point of the room to another. There’s a certain restraint in his voice, which would make me think that he’s actually sorry, but I don’t buy it. It was too good to be true after all. Whenever I start to believe that my life will take a turn for the better, the universe just falcon-punches me in the face. I’ll never know what I did to possibly get on Destiny’s bad side, to be honest with you. Every time someone tells me “it’s going to get better” I want to kick them in the shin.

“Kenzie, I’m not saying that at all. I made a mistake, yes, and a big one. But I’m terribly sorry. You cannot fathom how sorry I am. I could say that I didn’t mean to hurt you, but that would be a lie. The last thing I want to do is keep lying to you. It’s not Claire’s fault either, she didn’t know; all blame’s on me”. Well, no shit Sherlock. “The reason why I wanted to hurt you so much is that I wanted to drive you away. I couldn’t have told you that I didn’t feel the same because that’s a lie and you would’ve seen right through it. Thing is…I really like you, Kenzie; I even think that I might be falling in love with you, and that scares the hell out of me”. Matt’s smile is half sad and half desperate, it saddens me more than what he just said. Wait, what...?!

“I’m more than ten years older than you, Mackenzie. You just turned eighteen, you’re barely legal! I-I shouldn’t, it’s wrong, but I can’t help myself or my feelings. I’m way in too deep right now to keep away from you, so I did what I thought it’ll be enough for you to take action yourself. I’m a coward, and an asshole; I know that. I’m sorry, I broke your heart; I don’t deserve your forgiveness…” His throat constricts visibly and he can’t say anything else, unable to voice what I believe are his worst fears. So he really loves me back then? “I don’t deserve you, but I love you anyway”. Oh. Dear. God.

“Are you serious?” My voice sounds so broken that it takes Matt by surprise. He’s probably thinking the worst about the rivers that my eyes are crying down my face. I never knew I could be this happy. He tentatively gets closer, sitting as near to me as he can without entering my personal space. He’s still wondering if I’m happy or not about the news. Jesus, Murdock, you just confessed your feelings for me, of course, I’m happy. There’s nothing that can knock me down from the Seventh Heaven. I’m in Paradise right now. “You really feel that way?” I believe him, I do; but I need his verbal confirmation to be absolutely sure that I heard him right. He licks his lips and opens
his mouth halfway to say something, but ultimately decides to keep silent. Can’t he say it? Does he really hate so much to be in love with me?

“I do”. Matt finally says after a couple of seconds that seemed infinite. Oh, thank God. “I wish I didn’t, but I do. I’m at a crossroad here, between wanting to be with you and doing the right thing. But then again...maybe the right thing is to be with you”. He says with a tone that sounds final. He’s not backing away from this, not anymore. Matt’s embracing his love for me; instead of burying it under layers of self-made lies disguised as truths. He looks down, presumably to where my hands are tightly gripping the silk bed sheets. His hands take mine with such delicacy that I almost can’t feel his touch above all the pain shooting through my entire body every time I breathe or move. Matt kisses each knuckle softly, with his eyes closed; he looks so sweet and repented. I shouldn’t forgive him, but I can’t keep myself from doing it.

“Why did you kiss me that first time if you didn’t want to be with me? Why did you start all of this only to back down afterward if you knew how wrong it felt for you?” It’s the only thing that doesn’t make sense. He couldn’t have realized the “wrongness” of our relationship after starting it. Surely he thought about it long and hard before my birthday. So why do it anyway? He didn’t change his mind about his feelings, so why going through all of this and end up with three people hurt just because he “thought better of it”?

“You are so bad”. I try to sound scolding enough, but I can’t contain myself any longer. I burst out in a fit of giggles, covering my mouth with my hands in order to retain some dignity. It hurts so much that half of my laughter consists of choked cries of pain. He chuckles lightly, knitting his brows in concern at my state of distress. Oh my, it hurts like hell when I laugh. “You’re dangerous, Murdock. You should be in jail for seducing young ladies this much”. I mean this as a joke, but the expression of panic and sadness that crosses Matt’s face makes me think better of my twisted sense of humor. Damn it. “I’m sorry, I was joking. You’re not going to jail. I wouldn’t turn you in any way”.

“You wouldn’t dare, would you?” He says as if challenging me, with a raised eyebrow and the smuggest smile that I’ve seen on his face. He shouldn’t test me like this. I mean, I’m hurting like hell, but the want is still present; especially now that I know how he feels about me. Damn, I would just jump him if I could right now.

“I wouldn’t dare to do what, Mr. Murdock?” I try to sound sexy yet serious, but it comes out as more of an unappealing croak; it still does the work though. Matt’s cocky smile disappears to be replaced by the familiar jaw twitch that I love. God damn, he’s fucking beautiful. I really, really want to just grab him by the hair and kiss him so passionately that it hurts both of us. But I can’t, I’m all bruised and cut. Still, if good turns to better, I’m all patched up; which reminds me... “By the way, great job you did on my bandages. I knew you were better than me, but not that you were this good”.

Murdock’s expression becomes tense and my stomach twists uncomfortably. She didn’t, did she? “You called Claire??!” My voice goes up a couple of octaves and it burns my vocal chords by pure overwork. I can’t help it, I’m so mad. Not with her, with him. How could he be so insensitive as to call her to help me after he did what he did to hurt both of us?? Is he stupid or what? He opens his mouth to say something in his defense but I shut him up with some more mean words. “Why would you do that? Are you conscious of how much you must have hurt her and what it would feel like to
patch me up? Of course, you didn’t, I can’t believe that she even agreed to help me out. You can be really bold when you want to…”

“I didn’t have any other choice, Mackenzie. If I didn’t call her you would’ve died! I couldn’t take you to a hospital, and it was an urgent matter; you were bleeding so much…” This shuts me up. He looks so heartbroken that I can’t chastise him any further. He surely was so scared and worried. Now I feel bad for scolding him about saving my life. This is so fucked up.

“You’re right, I’m sorry. You were just trying to save me; it’s not my right to call you out on something like that”. This is exhausting and confusing. So many things happened since I woke up, and that was like a couple of hours ago. Half an hour ago I was ready to murder him, but now I want nothing more than to hug him and kiss him. This is exactly what this man does to me; he drives me crazy. “Let’s just…try to move forward pass this whole mess, shall we?” Matt’s shoulders drop a little, signifying that the tension trapped within him has been released. Good, with all the awkwardness out of the way we can get to the important thing: our relationship from now on. “You love me and I love you; that’s what matters”.

As I cast down my eyes towards our hands I hear him exhaling deeply and see him tightening his grip gently. One of his hands lets go and grabs me by the chin, slowly pulling my head upward in order to look me in the eye (even if he can’t see me, I can see him anyway; it’s the gesture that counts, you know…). I get the same feeling as before, the one that gives me the impression that he’s gazing right into my soul with his sightless eyes. It’s mesmerizing, yet unnerving at the same time. The sensation that his warm breath provokes when it hits my face sends shivers down my spine. He’s so close to me now; his face is merely inches away from mine. Maybe he’ll kiss me–

“I was dying to do this again”. Matt whispers before planting his lips against mine, softly but firmly. His calmness is morphing into a burning passion with every passing second. I’m in Heaven again. He sits close to me now, slipping an arm around me so he can keep me upright without hurting me. I would surround his neck with my arms, but they hurt too much. Thankfully he’s propping my head up with his right hand, otherwise, I’m positive that I’ll just plop back down on the bed before being able to withstand five seconds of this. Murdock is so gentle with me that I barely feel his hands holding me.

Matt starts to slowly lay me down on the mattress so I can be more comfortable and he doesn’t have to support my weight any longer. He fully gets on the bed to be right above me, but he doesn’t put any of his own weight on me. He’s being so careful that it borders on annoying. His forearms come to rest at each side of my head and make me feel trapped but safe; like there isn’t a place more safe on Earth. I want to stay here like this forever. The kiss becomes more urgent and wild as if he were trying to devour me to ease his hunger or something. It’s taking my breath away. “Aren’t you concerned that I’m barely legal?” I mutter between kisses and as soon as I open my mouth his tongue is dancing with mine. Oh, sweet baby Jesus.

“No, if you shut up about it”. Matt says half jokingly and half serious. I like feisty Murdock very much, wouldn’t mind having him around more often. His snarky retorts give me goosebumps. His deft fingers tangle themselves in my hair, pulling ever so gently and extracting from me a helpless moan. I try to wriggle free from the prison that the sheets provide but it proves to be quite the difficult task. Matt balances himself on one forearm while helping me to get out under the silky cloths that separates us. Oh my, where is this going?

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“M-Matt…” My voice sounds so small and pleading, right on the verge of breaking from raw want. I never knew I needed this so much in my life; that I need him this much. To have him above me, kissing me like I’m a goddess he worships. I feel adored like this; utterly loved and wanted. Matt makes a humming noise in the pose of a question, right under my left ear where he’s kissing and
nipping softly at my smooth skin. I hope he leaves a mark there and in many other places.

“Tell me what you want”. Matt’s voice is so low and laced with lust that it travels from my ears, right through my entire body, to my pelvic muscles. This is starting to feel like one of those erotic best-sellers; not that I mind though. The same hand that pulled away the sheets starts to explore beneath my shirt (which is one of Murdock’s, by the way) and leaves more goose bumps on its wake. This, in turn, elicits another whine from my throat that it’s almost swallowed by the lips that devour mine. I can’t think straight anymore, too overwhelmed by all the sensations coursing through my body. Every nerve picks a distinctive feeling and sends it right to my brain in order to be processed, but the overflow it’s making it an impossible mission to analyze more than one sense’s stimuli.

“I want you; that’s all I want. That’s all I ever wanted. But we both already know that, so the real question here is what do you want, Matthew?” I turn the question on him since I just can’t help but keep doubting his true feelings and intentions. In all honesty, I can’t say that he’s just toying with me, has been doing so all alone, since it doesn’t make sense, but then again he did “cheat” on me with Claire. Even if he just did it for a good reason (at least from his point of view) it hurt me bad, and that’s a trust that he can’t just win back with words. Not even with actions. Not so soon. I need to see commitment, over time. Promises don’t mean anything if they aren’t kept. I think he notices the real meaning behind my words; that it’s not just playful bed-chatter. He pulls back a little and furrows his brows, thinking for a moment.

“Of course I want you as well”, he says with what sounds like conviction, but he’s hesitant about something as well. “But not like this”, with these words he stunts me, leaving me more confused than I was before. What the hell does he mean by that? Matt appears to notice my distress and puzzlement since his brow deepens and his eyes get that “I’m not joking” kind of hardness. “Mackenzie, I know you haven’t looked at yourself, but you must certainly feel like shit. You have multiple cut wounds and fractures, I can’t do anything physical with you on this state, I’ll just make things worse”. He has a point here, but then again… “I don’t even think about saying that pleasure will balance the pain, I’m not gonna hurt you any more than those assholes did. You need to rest, and when you are mostly healed”, he pauses dramatically for a second and I think that he’ll leave it just there, but when I see that sly smile of his creeping up his face I know that he’s up to no good. “Then, and only then we can finish what we started”. No! Come on, Murdock, you can’t just leave me hanging like this! It’s torture, for Christ’s sake! It can be months before I’m even close to fully healed; you can’t cockblock me for that long! So unfair.

“I can’t wait that long! You can’t just tell me that you’re not even going to kiss me for God knows how–”, upon seeing the expression on his face that reads “I’m not going to” I understand where he’s getting at. So, no sex until I’m recovered, but kisses are good to go. That’s something at least. “Oh, I get it. Fine, I’m not one hundred percent okay with it but I see the reasoning. Being completely frank, I don’t think it’s totally worth it either. I mean, it hurts like hell”, I see his smile crumble into a sad frown and quickly scramble to save it. “But that’s just when I move too much, I’m sure I’ll be fine in a couple of days. When you least expect it I’ll be already out of here”. My reassurance only brings a deadpan expression to his face, like I just stated something dumb. Okay, I know, it’s gonna take longer than just a few days to just feel fine, but that’s not a big deal. As soon as I’ll be able to move, even with assistance, I’ll be back at home. I mean, I can’t just stay here forever, my mom’s gonna go crazy if I do.

“You’re not leaving until you heal, Mackenzie. You’re badly injured; it would take at least a wheelchair to transport you. It’s too dangerous, you could re-open something while moving, and how are we even going to explain all of this. I can’t think of a good enough excuse. I think it’s better for everybody if you stay here”. His blunt assessment of the situation almost leaves me speechless. I begin to protest but knowing it won’t get me anywhere I change tactic and ask about my mother. “I
know it’s not the ideal, but it would be best to leave her in the dark as much as possible. You could try to contact her and tell her that you’re fine, use whatever lie you told her while you were gone, but only that. The more you say the more you involve her in all of this, and I’m pretty sure you know what that means”. Danger; it means to put her in danger. And it doesn’t even have to relate to Daredevil. After my “tea party” with the gang of dipshits, she can be in danger just because of me.

“Okay, I’ll stay. But only because I can’t move and I don’t want to risk my mother’s life”. Those are not all the reasons, of course. I mean, I have the opportunity to stay at Matt’s apartment for as long as it takes for my body to heal. That can take weeks, even months. It’s practically a dream come true; all I ever wanted since I met the lawyer in red glasses. Still, I can’t let go of the reason that brought me here in the first place. I’m certain that those thugs aren’t looking just for him; they might as well be behind my trail too. “What are you going to do about them?” I ask already knowing the answer; he’s going to go after them. To put them behind bars before they can land us in our graves. His face says as much as when he puts on one of those “I’m on the verge of murder right now” looks that kinda turn me on but make me a little sad at the same time. I know how hard it is for him to resist that impulse sometimes. And even when I think that those scumbags deserve to die, I don’t want him to succumb to that temptation. I understand how important it is for him to not cross that line, and I’m proud that he hasn’t done it so far. I don’t wish to push him pass it.

“You should rest now; I got to go to the office to get some documents. I don’t know how to pass this through Foggy and Karen; they’ve been asking for you since you ran away, and now it’s only going to get worse. I’ll see what I can come up with; hopefully a good enough excuse that’ll let me work from here as much as possible without raising many eyebrows. After all, since you can’t move you’re gonna need a lot of help”. The smug grin painted on his face tells me all I need to know (mainly about some bath times that I definitely plan to enjoy, don’t mind me). “I’ll be back soon. If anything happens, just call me, okay?” I nod, seeing my cell phone placed on the nightstand to my right, besides a glass of water and what looks to be some pills with handwritten instructions. Matt fully gets up from the bed and kisses me on the forehead, right on my hairline, before stepping out of the bedroom. I hear some movement in the adjacent room, what seems to be him grabbing his discarded jacket and cane. After some more footsteps receding down the hallway I hear the door opening a closing. I’m all alone once again.

Jesus fucking Christ, these have been a crazy couple of days! I’m tired, hungry and hurting all over, but now that I know how Murdock truly feels about me I don’t even care about my body being a total wreck. Well, except for the part that it’s in such a bad shape that he won’t even get me off… Maybe I can get him off? Dunno, I’ll have to see if he’s up for it; gives me the impression that he isn’t the kind to like to be the only one pleased. As long as I don’t move –or do much of anything, really– I might heal faster, at least to a point where we can do some things. I mean, I really want to know what it feels like to have his hard-muscled body pressing down on mine, even if there’s no sex involved. It sounds like kind of a fetish, but I’m not sure. Anyway, I just really want more physical contact with Matt. And the fact that I’ll be staying in his apartment until I heal it’s not helping at all so far. God! I can’t catch a break, can I?

At least it’s over, you know? The struggling, and the suffering; we cleared things out, so everything should be good now. I still have the situation with my stepfather, but maybe that I’m kind of officially with Murdock he might be inclined to help me after all. I just have to ask and I could have Daredevil beating the shit out of that excuse of human being. That’s just too awesome to even think about, and it turns me on a little bit. Weird, amirite? I definitely have a thigh for strength. Like just the thought of Matt being able to pull me up and fuck me against a wall is enough to make me wetter than any ocean. Am I being too explicit for your liking? Cause I really don’t care, I just want to fuck Matthew into the next week, more or less.

I hope he doesn’t take long. I mean, I don’t want to bother him, nor be too needy. But being
bedridden in an apartment that isn’t mine, without anything to do…I’m going to die of boredom, if not from my injuries. Murdock doesn’t even have a TV (not that he would since he’s blind; I totally get that, I’m not an asshole, okay?). So I just want to hang out with him, to pass the time, even if there’s no sex involved. I know that he has his life, a job—sorta two—and things to do besides taking care of me, but now that we’re finally back I just don’t want to miss any second that I get in his company. That’s all, really; me and my big-ass selfishness.

Anyway, I should probably take advantage of this time I have to myself to get some sleep. I know I’ve been asleep until now, but it felt more like unconsciousness than truly restful sleep. Probably I was just passed out from the ungodly combination of pain and painkillers. And now I’m awake and everything still hurts like hell and I’m all alone, so why shouldn’t I try to nod off while Murdock’s away. Is either that or boring myself to death. Like I said already, I have no idea when Matt will be back, it could be in twenty minutes or two hours. And besides, I think he’ll appreciate that I’m taking my resting so seriously. Also, I really want to get better as fast as possible, and not only cause I want to get in Daredevil’s sexy pants, but because I’ve been away from home for too long and I cannot stand it anymore. I miss my mom and I’m worried sick about her. I fear that the psycho that she married will beat her more than he usually does and that she’ll end up in the hospital again; or even worse, dead. I’ll never forgive myself if that happens to her just because I went away, unable to handle rejection from some guy that I barely know and that I’ve been stalking for months. She deserves better than this. So I got to get home soon, to save her from the brutality of that monster. Maybe this time I can finally get Matt to help me beat him up. Show him once and for all what happens if he doesn’t stop messing with my mom.

I can’t really say how much time I slept, only that when I woke up I heard movement in the apartment so I knew that Murdock was back. Not really sure what he’s doing, but if I can deduce those noises correctly, he’s in the kitchen, ergo, he must be cooking something; probably dinner, if we take into account the time. Great, I’m starving! I don’t know if I can eat normally or have to follow some kind of diet for a while, I’ve never been this injured before, but any solid food that I can get inside my stomach is welcomed. I’ll also like some piece of hot ass in the form of Matt Murdock, even when we can’t dance the horizontal tango yet. Good, I really want to get physical with him. I think I actually dreamed about that while I waited for him to return.

“Hey, how you feel?” Matt’s sudden appearance out of nowhere almost gives me a heart attack. He notices my surprise and quickly apologizes, arguing that he just wanted to see how I was doing and to ask me what I wanted to eat. I only answer that anything light would be fine since I don’t think I can digest anything heavy like meat. He nods in understanding and walks back to the kitchen, lowly whistling a foreign tune. I can’t place which song it is, but I like the way it sounds. Or at least I like how he’s making it sound. Although I could put those luscious lips to better use, I would still be hungry if I did so. Damn, I’m so conflicted right now. It’s probably because of the drugs, but whatever.

While I wait for dinner to be served, I try to make sense of everything that went down in the last twenty-four hours and it’s just crazy. I mean, I don’t even know… “How did you find me?” My voice’s still pretty much ruined, but knowing not only that he has super senses, but also the fact that he’s so worried about me he’s probably just listening to every breath I take, I just assume he heard me. And he did if his head popping in the bedroom through the doorframe is anything to go by. He’s listening intently, I can tell from a mile away. I better elaborate because although I’m pretty sure he understands what I’m asking about, I know it’s gonna take some coaxing before he tells me
everything. “How did you even know I was there? I know you practically have memorized every warehouse of the Kitchen, but still, how?” I need to know. Did he stumble upon a gang beating up someone and when he got closer he realized it was me who was getting her ass kicked? Was he out there day and night (as both, Matt Murdock and Daredevil) looking for me? Did he sweep every abandoned warehouse till he found the right one? I wanna know if it was a happy coincidence or if it was meant to be because he wanted it to be. I wish to know how much I really mean to him.

“I heard you”. What? Was does he mean? Like, he was in the neighborhood and heard a girl screaming or...? “My senses; when I focus enough I can sort of combine them and turn them into a kind of radar. Every night, I would skim every rooftop I could reach and just stand there, amplifying this sense, trying to catch any clue that was distinctive enough. I was desperately looking for you; so that night, I was on a low roof a couple of blocks away when I finally found where you were. And at that moment I didn’t even stop to think for a second, I just ran, straight towards your location. By the time I got there I was seeing red, and not because of the ‘world on fire’. I was so mad I couldn’t think straight, I just wanted to hurt them as badly as they did to you”. Matt stops for a moment, trying to regain his breath and contain the tears that threatened to fall down his face. I can’t begin to imagine what he must have felt in that instant. But, if I picture the same situation but with the roles reversed, I think I can get a pretty good idea. If I were him, I would have killed them all. Still, I’m really proud that he didn’t sink that low. That’s a line that once crossed you can’t come back from. I love him because he’s a protector, a defender, not a murderer.

“What are you then, a radar technician?” This is one of those moments when my brain kinda just fucks up on its own and this sort of shit comes out of my mouth. Matt looks at me dumbfounded, not getting the joke at all (you did, though, right?). Why do I have to be like this? “Never mind. Anyway, thank you, for coming to save me”. I haven’t thanked him yet. I know, I’m a bitch, but the face he’s pulling right now is exactly the reason why I haven’t done so until now. He looks at me like I just insulted him or something, feeling offended for having me thinking that I have to thank him for something like this. He probably believes that he owes me at least this much and that even if he didn’t he would have still done it because he loves me. But from my point of view, is extraordinary that anybody aside from my mother would want to save my life. “Seriously, you didn’t have to and I got myself into that particular mess. I decided to run away and hide in a dangerous place; you were just looking out for a troubled and stupid kid. You surely left something or someone else unattended to get to me; who knows, somebody could have died because I couldn’t handle heartbreak. So, yes, I thank you for saving me and I apologize for having put you in that position in the first place. I’m really sorry, Matt, and although I can’t promise that it won’t happen again, knowing myself, I can swear I’ll try to be better”. Oh God, I have to stop with the self-pity parties I’ve been throwing as of late, they’re just pathetic. Damn it, I even got Murdock tearing up a little.

“I’m sorry that you feel that you even have to thank me and apologize for this. It was my entire fault, Mackenzie. I did you wrong in the worst way, it’s only natural that you wanted to bolt away. After all, that was the reaction I was looking for. But now I know how naïve and mistaken I was, and not because of the physical pain you had to endure as a result of my stupidity, but the broken heart you had to mend yourself. I’m deeply sorry, Kenzie. I know there’s no redemption for me; I can’t fix your heart, but at least I can help your body heal”. And now I’m just a few more words away from sobbing uncontrollably. I guess no one’s wrong or right when it comes to this, we both made mistakes and we both got hurt because of this. Worst of all, we hurt each other just cause we didn’t want to face our feelings. “It’s not that I want to avoid the conversation or change the topic, but the food will burn if I don’t return to it. I’ll be back in a minute with our meals, okay?” I nod in response, giving him my permission to leave even when he doesn’t need it. I don’t want him to feel like he owes me anything or, even worse, to pity me. I want normal Murdock back, just like before everything went to hell.

“So, are you staying in tonight?” I ask Matt as I see him walk back into the bedroom holding a tray
with two plates and glasses. As he hears my question he pauses and opens his mouth to answer me, but nothing comes out and he starts to fumble with what he’s trying to say. Obviously, he won’t stay. And as disappointing as that may seem, I’m not surprised in the least. I fell in love with him because of his role as Daredevil; not because I like to see him in red spandex or because I have a fetish for watching him beat the shit out of garbage people, but because he’s out day and night fighting for what’s right and defending the weak from the strongest and meanest that society throws at us every day. I don’t want him to stay and babysit me when he can be out there saving innocent people and jailing criminals. I want him to clean the streets of assholes and scumbags, so this city can be safer for everybody else. I can take care of myself; I won’t die in the meantime, I think.

“I’m really sorry, Mackenzie. I would love to stay, but I have to find those bastards that did this to you. I can’t just stay put with my arms crossed and let them run free. They can still find you again, and I don’t even want to imagine what could happen if they do”. He’s right. Even though I try to act as a cold-hearted bitch all the time, being scared of nothing, I would lie if I said I’m not terrified to go out there again. Here, in this silk-bed-sheets covered bubble I’m as safe as I can be, under the watchful eye of the Devil of Hell’s Kitchen himself, but in the streets, I’m just another lanky nerd implicitly asking to be beaten up by a gang of bullies. I know a few things about hand to hand combat and self-defense, but I’m in no way near Matt’s level of skill or physical power. And I’m not ready either –let alone qualified– to carry a weapon with me everywhere I go. I mean, only one I had was the hobo’s switchblade, and I don’t even have that anymore. I’m powerless, especially now that I’m bedridden, so I’ll let the ass-kicking be handled by Murdock at least for now. I just hope he doesn’t come back half dead, because I’m in no condition to try to save his life, and I don’t think I can manage to call Claire either. “But don’t worry, I asked Foggy to come over for a few hours, just in case you need anything or something bad happens. If you get some sleep I’ll be back before you notice”. His smile is warm and reassuring so I can’t even fake complain to him. Hey, at least I won’t be alone. And if I just go to sleep early it’ll seem like he didn’t go at all.

This is how we end up sitting next to each other on the bed, eating contently and chatting about nothing in particular. I like this, the domesticity of it. I could get used to this, sans the broken bones, of course. If this is what living with Murdock is like, I wouldn’t mind at all, even when he goes to fight crime every night. Don’t get me wrong, it would be hella stressing considering I would never know when he’s going to come back and when he isn’t. Also, I don’t think I’d look forward to stitching him up every time he comes back half alive. But being here, able to do that, is more comforting than living somewhere else and not even know if he’s okay or not. Guess it’s the price I have to pay for being in love with him. And I don’t even know what I’m complaining about; I’m the same way and pull the same reckless shit every day. Maybe this means we are meant to be. That if we are together we’ll have each other’s backs, always. I like that thought; to both be vigilantes who take care of each other’s wounds after we go on street-cleaning night rounds. “Anyways, he’ll be coming soon enough, so I better get changed and going. I’ll see you in a few hours, okay?” Matt’s comment brings me back to reality only to realize that we both finished our respective dinners and that he’s taking our plates away to wash in the sink. Well, that went way faster than I expected. Shame.

“Okay”, I mutter quietly, not bothering to yell so it carries to the kitchen, knowing well that he’ll hear me anyway. Now all I have left to do is lay back and wait for Foggy to arrive. If I can fall asleep in the meantime, better. It’s not that I don’t want to see him, is just that I don’t know how much he knows and I don’t want to start an awkward conversation. Matt comes back a few moments later in full gear except for the cowl, which he carries in his hands. He says goodbye and explains that Foggy will let himself in since he has a copy of the keys. I say my goodbye as well, wishing him luck and asking that he returns home safe. He stops for a moment at the mention of the word “home” but keeps going a heartbeat later. In all honesty, it just slipped out, but it’s still nice to think about this place –about him– as home.
It’s been a rough couple of weeks. I’m healing relatively fast, but I’m still bedridden and since I’m getting better Matt’s not spending much time with me anymore. I totally get it, I don’t want to keep him away from his obligations, but it can get real lonely in here. I can’t wait for the moment I’ll be able to walk off of this bed and go about my day like a healthy person. Mainly so I can do things by myself once again, but also because it’ll mean that I can finally have some sexy time with my dear boyfriend. And, well, about all that...we haven’t put any labels on what we have, but it’s just easier to refer to him that way. It’s been great, despite all the impediments like my physical state and his comings and goings as an attorney and as Daredevil. Actually, I’m currently awaiting his arrival back from work. It’s almost time for dinner, and if I could move freely I would be already cooking something, but all I can do is wait. Also, I think tonight is one of my bathing nights, so I’m really looking forward to that. Even though it’s not my first since I came here a while ago, Matt has been pretty much “hands off” these past weeks, too afraid to hurt me to even try anything more than kissing and cuddling. I’m not complaining, well, I’m complaining a little. I am extremely grateful for all he has done for me, but come on! A lady needs to be satisfied from time to time. And I don’t even know how he’s dealing with all of this since he won’t talk about it with me. It must be pretty hard to give someone you love a bath when you’re trying to remain practically celibate all the while.

“So, did you kick some butt tonight?” I ask Matt as I see him walk through the bedroom door. He looks worn out, which probably means that his day at court didn’t go so well. Too bad, I know that this Punisher ordeal hasn’t been the easiest or the smoothest going. It’s exactly the reason why Murdock has been so busy as of late. He sighs tiredly and takes off his blazer before sitting at the end of the bed. He’s still bruised from this last couple of nights fighting and chasing Castle and all those others gangs and mobs that are involved in this whole mess. I would be lying if I said I ain’t worried like hell, afraid that the next time I see him leave at night will be the last. But I can’t keep him bound to me; this is his purpose, after all.

“Yeah, I kicked some butt. Speaking of that, let’s get you out of here and into the tub for a quick bath”. He sounds really tired, which almost makes me want to tell him that we can forego the bath for tonight and go straight to sleep, but I really want to scrub all this dirt off my body. Matt pulls back the covers and lifts me up, carrying me all the way to the adjacent bathroom where he sits me down on the toilet. He opens the tap to fill the tub and –while we wait– he helps me take off my shirt, pants, and underwear. Once the bathtub it’s filled and the water has the appropriate temperature, he lifts me up once again and slowly lowers me into the bubble bath. It feels so good. Thankfully by now my cuts have mostly healed and closed up, so lathering my body doesn’t sting anymore; it only hurts when I wash over the parts that are still bruised, like my torso. Of course, Matt’s really careful about it, especially since he knows exactly where I’m still hurting. Unfortunately, he lets me wash certain areas of my body all by myself. Goddamn it, Murdock, I just want to be touched!

“Can I ask you a question? It’s been on my mind for quite some time now”. Well, that’s new. I nod nonchalantly, trying to come up with guesses about what he could be wondering about, but as it turns out, I’m way too enthralled by what’s going on in this tub to even fully concentrate on our conversation. Jesus, only if his hands wandered a little lower...“Why do you wear your hair short?” Hmm, really? That’s your question, Murdock? Pretty normal question; I was waiting for something more scandalous (and interesting, by default). Still, can’t blame him for being curious, after all, not many girls use their hair short (unless they’re lesbians; not judging, by the way).

“Have you ever been in a fight while having long hair? Not practical at all”, I answer at length. And it’s the truth. I’ve been in fights basically all my life since I was a little girl at least, so I learned
the hard way that having long luscious hair is a disadvantage when it comes to fist fighting. I had my hair pulled one too many times by bullies –both male and female–, so I ended up deciding to wear it short as long as I would be in that situation. And since I decided to become a teenage-amateur vigilante, I knew I could never wear it long again. It’s fine, I’m used to it by now; besides, I actually like it. It’s much more comfortable and practical when it comes to maintaining it. Of course, I had to learn to cut it myself since I never had enough money to regularly go to the hair salon to have it cut. It’s just how things are.

“Makes sense”, it’s Matt’s short answer. Honestly, it’s not really a good conversation topic. Guess he just wanted to scratch that curious itch he must’ve had for a while now. Maybe we should try something else; after all, we haven’t really talked in a while, with all this madness going on recently. We still don’t really know much about each other, and while we are doing well together, we can’t build a relationship with no foundation. I want to know about his dreams, his aspirations, what he wants for his future. And I want to tell him about all that too. I don’t want just sex from him, I want love and understanding. I wish for a lasting connection between us, not just a short-lived fling. Maybe even marriage. I don’t know; I love him, and right now I feel like I want to spend the rest of my life with him. This feeling may change with time, but I don’t think so. I mean, I still have to finish high school, and I want to go to college, but I don’t want to break up with him. I think he’s my soul mate, as crazy as it sounds.

“You knew from the beginning that I was following you, you said so yourself, so why did you let me if you feared that I was going to find out whom you really were?” If we are going to ask each other things that have been on our minds for a while now, then I have to ask this. I’ve been trying to come up with an answer by myself, but I can’t choose one of the many hypotheses. I want an answer, from him. I need to know if he didn’t really see me as a threat back then, or if he took pity on me. I want to know what he thought of me at that time and if that changed after all that went down between us.

“If I have to be completely honest with you, and myself, I think I started to fall in love with you from the moment you stepped into that police station all those months ago, as wrong as it sounds considering your age back then”. For real?! Oh my God, Matt, I can’t believe this! “You were there because you were, you are, like me. You got arrested for saving some kids from bullies twice your size. You were so brave and knowing that a teenage girl was out there defending the weak not only worried me a little, to be honest, but it also inspired me and made me proud”. I inspired him, is he for real? He inspired me! He’s the reason I was even in that precinct, to begin with, because he saved me from my bullies. “When I realized that you were following me I was a little concerned that you might actually find out that I’m Daredevil, but at the same time I wanted you to. Because I wished that you knew who I really am, but I would have never told you directly”. That’s love right there, folks, there’s no mistaking it. “I was also afraid that you might get hurt while following me during the night, but I knew that you were keeping your distance, so I figured that you were smart enough to stay away from harm’s way. I was wrong though, you ended up in the hospital after getting shot. Jesus, at that moment I thought I was going to lose you. I was so scared”. He’s the sweetest ever, I can’t believe he was that worried about me when he didn’t even know me yet (can you believe that? I bet you can’t). Just the fact that he was already falling for me is mind-boggling.

“Thank you, for telling me. I’m really sorry if I ever got in your way while I was stalking you. I didn’t mean to do that”. I just wanted to see if I was right, after all. “Actually, in all truth, I was partly doing it so I could ask if you could kick my stepfather’s ass as Daredevil since I knew you couldn’t do much as Matt Murdock”. And I finally said it, what I’ve wanted to say since I met him in that alley. Matt looks at me like he’s conflicted about something, but I can’t say for sure what about. He doesn’t answer, the only reaction I get is his lips pulled in a thin line as his sightless eyes stay focused on anything except me. “You know what? Nerve mind, it’s just a silly fantasy I used to have”. Not
every dream comes true. I already have Murdock, so maybe I can deal with my stepfather being an asshole still. But my mom can’t...

“It did piss me off, very much, when I found out what happens in your household, with your stepfather and how he treats you and your mother. I wanted to do something about it, both as the vigilante and as the attorney I am. But I just kept thinking about how much worse I could make everything. If you haven’t done anything legally it’s probably because you can’t, so even as Daredevil I wouldn’t get proof enough to have him jailed. And if I just had beaten the hell out of him it wouldn’t have made a difference. He would’ve probably retaliated against you or your mother. I’m sorry for not being of much help, Mackenzie. I hate standing by and doing nothing, but I couldn’t bear the fact that you got hurt because of me, again”. He says “again” because I got my ass kicked by those lame gangsters. I get it, it’s fine. I don’t want to put him in an uncomfortable situation anyway. I’ll get my revenge sooner or later, one way or another. I assure Matt that it’s okay and he finishes bathing me, helping me out of the tub before getting me dried and clothed. “Changing the subject, I prepared a surprise for you, but we have to go up for it”. Oh my, what is it?

Matt helps me up to the rooftop where there’s a blanket with some pillows laying on the floor next to a picnic basket (from where did he even get that?) and a bunch of candles lighting everything up. It’s so beautiful! I can’t believe he did this for me. That corny thing I thought about what seems now like ages ago is coming true. It’s not as warm as I wish it would be but the sky is clear, which means I can tell Matt about them. I’m so happy right now. This is just amazing. I love him so much! “Is this all for me?” I ask with a croaking voice since I’m trying to hold back my tears of joy. He just nods and smiles timidly, getting closer to the setup before gently laying me down on top of the blanket and grabbing another that’s nearby to use for covering ourselves. Good thinking otherwise we might freeze to death or something. I definitely have the best boyfriend ever. “Thank you so much, Matt. It’s amazing. I love it”.

“I’m glad that you do. Now that you are feeling better I thought that we could have a proper date without taking the risk of going out. I should have waited until the weather was warmer, but in all honesty, I couldn’t wait any longer”. I couldn’t have either if his suggestive tone is hinting at what I think it’s hinting. Please, God, let it be that! It’s the least you can do for me after everything you put me through. (Yeah, I hear you saying that I put myself through all that, but not all blame is on me. Okay, it is, but shut up about it). Matt sits down next to me and starts taking things out of the basket. “Only downside is that I didn’t have time to prepare a decent meal for this, even when I did get to put this all together in time. We’ll just have to settle for some Thai food from the restaurant around the corner”.

“Are you kidding? I love that place. Oh, don’t get me wrong, I love your cooking too, but I don’t mind, this is all lovely just the same”. I don’t want to appear ungrateful or anything; besides, I already said before that he’s a great cook, I just don’t want him to think that I’m upset because he didn’t have enough time to make everything perfect according to him, for me it’s perfect no matter what. I applaud the effort and reward the thought. “Frankly, I couldn’t have asked for anything better. I’m a simple woman, you don’t need to dine me and wine me to win my heart. All you have to do is smile”. Ugh, so cheesy, but he does, so big and full of perfect white teeth. I love him so much that I could just die from what I’m feeling.

So, we end up having a lovely dinner in which we chat about what’s going on in this entire “The People v. Frank Castle” situation. It’s pretty messed up, from what I gather. I just hope it all ends well. I know Matt thinks he won’t solve anything by kicking my stepfather’s ass, but maybe if I get the Punisher to solve the problem...Wait, I really shouldn’t be thinking about this right now, I need to concentrate on our date and where it’s leading. Hopefully, we end up in “Funky Town”. Okay, that doesn’t even make much sense. I know, my jokes are lame as fuck, don’t need to remind me. It’s just that I’ve been horny for weeks now; I really need to get laid! I hope that tonight’s the night, you
know? I still haven’t healed completely, but there has to be something we can do, right? And as if all my prayers have been answered, Matt starts caressing one of my thighs under the thick blanket while he keeps talking nonchalantly about the Castle case. It starts innocent enough, just a bit above the knee, but once I get used to it—being soothed by the rhythm of the circles he draws over my skin—he starts moving his hand slowly, inch by inch, up my leg towards my pelvis. Sweet mother of God! And without realizing it, he’s suddenly way too close to me, with his mouth just whispering into my ear. He’s still talking about the same thing, but this is all obviously some kind of tactic to achieve...I don’t know what. I mean, if he’s trying to seduce me he doesn’t really need to. I’m head over heels for him; and if he’s trying to ease me into it, again, it’s not necessary. I’m all game.

“Mackenzie”, he says in the most velvety sounding voice I ever heard him use (it’s just pure dark chocolate), “we don’t have to do anything you don’t want to or don’t feel comfortable doing. You’re still healing, so if you feel pain at any point, let me know and I’ll stop immediately. Okay?” I just nod my agreement, because I can’t wait any longer, and I kiss him passionately. Oh, his lips taste so good. Just spicy enough from the Thai food and a bit sweet from the wine he was drinking. I wonder if the alcohol has to do with any of this. If it does, I don’t really mind that much. I can finally get what I want, or at least as further as Matt is willing to go and as much as my body can take. It still hurts like a bitch if I put too much pressure on my abdomen. Damn broken ribs!

I thought that after assuring me that I have the final say about what ends up happening tonight he would shut up and keep kissing me, but actually, he just keeps talking about the case between kisses as if nothing is happening. It’s kind of weird but at the same, it turns me on, which is even weirder. Anyway, I need to lie down soon, because this forty-five angle he’s keeping me in it’s hurting my ribs pretty badly. If we don’t change positions I might fall sooner than later. And as if he were a psychic or something, Matt pushes me softly all the way down until I’m laying my head comfortably amongst the pillows. He pulls the blanket back for an instant only to get himself under it before he covers us both with it. Oh my, oh my! Where is this leading to? Will we finally do it, or is this just a preliminary stage before we can do the real thing. Knowing him, he’ll probably wait until I’m fully recovered. I don’t think I can wait that long though. I need this man more than I need breathing.

Soon enough, Matt’s shirt is coming off and his lovely abs are on full display. God, I’ll never get tired of looking at them or touching them. He’s so gentle with me, and this time it looks like he’s not going to stop. Let’s hope things go well. Without even noticing it, my shirt disappears as well and Matt’s hands are all over me. Damn, they feel so good when caressing me. Oh, what a dream come true. It feels amazing to be touched by him; he knows exactly where to touch me to make me feel good. Thank the Lord for his enhanced senses. And as his hand strays further from my waist, down to my core, I thank Satan for making “sinning” so satisfying (how ironic). Hell yeah, we’re gonna have sex tonight!

Before any of us knows it, most of our clothes are gone and there’s so much skin to skin contact that we might catch on fire from all the friction. Come on, Matt! Just a bit less cloth between us and we’ll be in Heaven, I guarantee it. “Are you sure?” He asks one last time and I enthusiastically answer “yes”. Of course, I’m sure, Murdock. I’ve been sure about making sweet love with you since you noticed me in that dingy police station and saved me from staying the night in a cell. With my final verbal confirmation of permission, Matt removes the last pieces of clothing covering us and I never thought I would be this happy about having rooftop sex. Now I know that all that I went through was worth it. And I’m not saying it for doing the dirty deed; I say it because I’ve found the love of my life. And he just knows how to love me right. Bye, bye virginity. Welcome, new life full of love and happiness.
Well, that was interesting. Hope you liked it. There's not much going in the literal, physical sense, it's more of an emotional and psychological type of chapter. Nevertheless, it's essential in developing the plot further, even if it doesn't seem so.

Anyway, this chapter is the calm before the storm. A little reprieve before shit hits the fan, hard. If you thought the previous chapter was bad, you have no idea what I have in store. I feel sorry for you, and Mackenzie, but is just this kind of story...still, it'll have a happy ending, so don't worry for long.

As I always say, don't know where the next update will be, so don't hang on it too much. Only three more chapters to go.
In Satan we [don't] trust

Chapter Summary

"Well, what do you want me to say? Everything went to shit, as always. Least I'm not a virgin anymore..."

Chapter Notes

Chapter 8 comes out just a month after chapter 7?! Yeah, I can't believe it either, but here we are, just two chapters away from the end. My goal for this year is to finish this fanfic (especially after a two-year hiatus between chapters 6 and 7), and for next to finish my other 10-chapters-long one, so we'll see how that goes.

Important warnings for this particular chapter since shit hits the fan pretty hard: kind of explicit sex scene; very graphic murder; and attempted rape. If you feel uncomfortable with any of these just skip those parts or wait for next chapter altogether. You have been warned. Otherwise, enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Maybe you won’t believe me, after how happy I sounded the last time I spoke to you, but since then and once the eternity of confinement at Matt’s place finally passed, everything went to shit. I’m not even sure how all of this happened, to begin with; we were in a Heaven-on-Earth kind of blissful bubble, and all of the sudden my world fell apart. I mean, one day I lose my V-card and the next...And it’s worse than being shot, being cheated on and being beaten half to death, all combined. I can’t even begin to process what happened. It can’t be real, it just can’t. I won’t accept it, I refuse to. This is just too much. I guess you are wondering what the hell is going on. Well, I can’t tell you, not yet, so let’s rewind time a little bit so you can’t experience it by yourself. It’s awful and gruesome; I’m sorry, but this is the only way. Look, I’ll keep it short, okay? It’s a lot to take in and deal with right now. It all began yesterday night.

(Twelve hours ago. Mackenzie’s apartment)

After spending an eternity at Murdock’s apartment (and let me be clear on this, I’m not complaining about staying there for so long, I’m bitching about my body taking that long to heal), which even if I enjoyed it as much as I could it still seemed to last forever, I’ve finally come back home. I expected hell from my mom since I stayed away for so long, but I only find silence. My dickhead stepfather is working at this time, as per usual, but my mom should be here. And she isn’t. I try calling the houses where she works as a cleaning lady and the owners all say that she isn’t there as well. I entertain for a little the thought that she might be out, but that seems unlikely. So, as time
passes and I’m still alone in my home, I begin to fear the worst.

At first, I pray that she has run away like me; that she has left him after all and has decided to stay at a friend’s house or whatever, but all of her stuff is still here. She didn’t leave; she didn’t go anywhere. If I want to know what happened to her, I have to wait for her repulsive husband to come back and try to beat the truth out of him, if it’s necessary. But the longer I wait the more I feel like he’s not returning tonight. So I guess I’m down to my last option for the time being: talk to the neighbors. Maybe they saw or heard anything of relevance; maybe they know where my mom is. I just have to cross the hallway and knock on the door. Hopefully, there’ll be someone there at this time of the day. And if that turns out to be another dead end, I’ll have to come back tomorrow. I’ll keep coming as much as I have to until I find out what the hell happened to my mom, and once I do, I’ll kill that bastard for sure, even if he didn’t do anything to her. I don’t care; I had enough of his abuse and impunity. The shithead has to go down.

As I take the few steps that lead me from my door to Mrs. Donovan’s, my feet feel like lead and my stomach can’t stop revolving its contents. I knock softly a few times, not being able to hit the wood any louder, feeling that otherwise, the resounding noise will be way too hard to endure. I don’t know what it is -if it’s fear or anger-, but something is making everything around me just a tad too sharp. It’s overwhelming, like being hangover must feel; too loud and too bright, making me go into overdrive. There’s no answer, only silence, and I can’t take it anymore. I start banging desperately, Mrs. Donovan and her irritation be damned. I need to know something, everything. I can no longer be in the shadows, not when it comes to my mom.

It feels like years go by until I hear light footsteps on the other side of the door before it opens up revealing an elderly black woman. She looks up, with kind and sage eyes, and stares sadly at me. Something’s not right. She opens her mouth to tell me something; to tell me everything that she knows. I listen to her intently, but I’m not able to process the information as it is being registered in my brain. I can only file it away for later reviewing. I was right, this is simply too much. I need to leave, now. I need to be somewhere else, anywhere. I thank the old lady in a mechanical way and get my feet to move as fast as I can. I can’t stay here anymore. This is no longer my home. I’m so sorry mom.

***Matt’s point of view***

I’ve been out for a few hours now, just about to reach my apartment building front door after being at the office since early morning. It’s almost lunchtime by now. As Mackenzie finally healed I was able to return to my usual routine. She said that she would go home to see how her mother’s doing and that she’ll come back as soon as she can. I told her to take her time since she’s been away for so long, but she clearly –as much as she loves her mom– wants to spend more time with me. I’m not complaining, but it’ll be healthy for us to have some space once again; otherwise, this still-newly-developed relationship will flicker out faster than a candle being blown.

As soon as I step through my front door I notice that something’s not right. There’s someone here. It’s just Kenzie but...she’s crying? Discarding my cane and coat at the entrance, and my blazer at the couch, I fully enter my apartment and rush to my bedroom where I find her quivering in a corner, sitting on the floor. She’s shaking violently while hugging her legs, completely in shock and with tears streaming down her face. For a moment I stand frozen, trying to comprehend what’s wrong. Checking her body for injuries, from this distance, proves to be futile since she’s basically intact; no wounds or other damage done to her body recently. There’s nothing except the scars from her
encounter with those assholes. Whatever happened to her wasn’t physical, which –in all honesty–
scares me more because it means that it won’t heal that quickly or at all. But why is she so
traumatized? Did something happen to her mom?

“Mackenzie?” I ask tentatively since I can’t really be sure that she’s present or far too gone into her
own shell-shocked self. She doesn’t seem to even register my presence; actually, it’s unlikely she’s
aware of her surroundings and location. It looks like she automatically came here without even
knowing where she was going or that she was moving at all. Whatever it is that happened to her is
way worse than what I initially thought. Instead of just standing at the threshold, I start slowly
walking towards her, attempting to not spook her or make her more anxious. She still hasn’t noticed
me, or at least it appears that she’s not acknowledging that she did. It’s not until I get almost right in
front of her that she stops trembling and sobbing. I crouch down, with the intent to appear non-
threatening. I don’t know how she’ll react to me being here, so I don’t wanna risk any chance of her
mistaking my approach for something other than reassuring and friendly. Now that we’re at eye
level, I can sort of sense her staring at me. Well, at least that’s something.

“She’s dead, he’s on the run. He killed her. The neighbors are going to hold a funeral at the
cemetery later this week”. Her response is so quiet that if it weren’t for my enhanced senses I
wouldn’t have heard it. I feared that something like this had happened, but I didn’t think it would be
true. I know what it’s like to lose a parent, especially what it’s like to have your parent be murdered,
but both of hers died this way. Yes, her dad was killed in the line of duty; it’s not exactly the same
yet it doesn’t change anything. And now, her mother’s death comes by the hand of none other than
her own stepfather, not by an outsider criminal. Her grief is justified and –knowing her– she must be
feeling incredibly guilty for being away all this time. It’s not her fault; if it’s anyone’s then it’s
absolutely mine. Because of me, she ended broken and bloody, and in retaliation that led to her
mother’s murder at the cold hands of that bastard. I know that I don’t have anything to do directly
with the events that unfolded, but if I have to guess, knowing her stepfather’s tendencies and
behavior, he must have taken out his anger regarding the absence of her stepdaughter on his wife.
And the worst thing is that I could’ve done something, even if it were a temporary solution.

“I’m so sorry, Mackenzie. If there’s anything I can do...” But I know that now is too late. I
should’ve helped her before this all happened; now these words of consolation taste bitter in my
mouth. Unfortunately, I can’t offer much else than my comfort. I can try looking for him as Daredevil and bring him to justice, but who knows if there’s even any evidence to use against him in
court. Besides, I get the feeling that Kenzie doesn’t even want that. No, she might want to repay him
in kind, beating him up with her own hands. If it comes down to that I’ll help her, of course, as long
as she doesn’t go as far as to try to kill him. I understand her pain and her desire for revenge, I’ve
been there myself, but I can’t let her go down that path. It’s a point of no return; a one-way road that
only leads to a world of chaos and destruction. If she gets a taste of it, she might like how it feels. I’m
not saying she’ll become a serial killer of sorts, but she could end up like Frank, and I can’t let that
happen. I won’t lose her to that, to him. If she wants to avenge her mother I’ll be by her side; I’ll
even be her instrument if she asks me to. I don’t mind being the weapon if it means saving her from
more suffering, but I draw the line at killing. I love her, but I won’t take someone’s life for her, not
even if she’s killed.

“Find him. I want revenge”. I was afraid she would say this. I understand how she’s feeling; I felt
the same way when I found my dad dead in an alley and when years later I was faced with the
scumbag that had murdered him. But I know that I made the right choice and that killing is not the
answer. It only leads to more pain and anger. The hate cycle won’t end with his death, not even if
justice is made and he’s incarcerated. Nothing will bring her mother back; she’ll have to learn to deal
with her absence. I believe that she already knows this since her father died in similar circumstances.
If she could do it once, she can do it twice. And whilst she had her mom to help her mourn her dad,
she doesn’t have her anymore, but she has me. I’ll be with her; I’ll stay by her side. She needs
someone to keep her from falling into the dark. I have to pull her back while I still can.

“Mackenzie, I don’t think that’s a good idea...” She looks up sharply at me and her brow furrows. It’s natural that –after the initial shock wears off– she becomes angry, but her hate won’t lead to anything better than the grief she’s feeling.

“I don’t care, Matt! He deserves it”. He does, I won’t lie to her or to myself about it. He deserves to burn in Hell for all eternity and he will, eventually. But he won’t get there by her hands or mine. Kenzie gets up abruptly and starts pacing impatiently the room. She’s becoming restless, and I know that this kind of behavior leads to recklessness. I know her well by now; if I don’t deter her now from the path that she’s inclined to go through, I won’t be able to do it later.

“I know he does, but you can’t just kill him! It’s not right”. At my comment, she stops dead on her tracks and just stands there paralyzed. For a moment I think that she’ll start arguing against me and try to convince me to give in just this one time, but she stays silent, probably thinking about what she’ll say next. This could break everything off. I love her, but I don’t think I can stand by something like this. I’ve already been put in this same position by someone else many years ago, and things didn’t work out between us.

“Oh, don’t worry about it. Killing him is a punishment way too merciful for him. I want to make him suffer; I wanna make him pay”. She sounds so col -so cynical about it-, as if she lost all the hope in the world and she couldn’t believe in goodness anymore. This is exactly what I meant; if I let her go freely on her own she might end up becoming the monster that she has been fighting for so long. After everything that happened in her life, all the loss, the abuse, the loneliness and the hatred, she could’ve given in to the temptation of evil. But she hasn’t, and I’m certain I can keep her from doing so still. After a moment of silence, and with the rage starting to pass, she begins to cry silently again. “He took her from me. My mom was all I had; she was all I was ever going to have”. Before her knees fully give out I manage to catch her in an embrace. Now she’s crying profusely, hiding her face with her hands and quietly sobbing into them. I slowly lower ourselves unto the floor so we can sit more comfortably since she couldn’t really stand anymore. All this emotional stress is taking a toll on her body, weakening it by the second.

As I sit with my back resting against the closet door, I softly pet her head, trying to calm her a little bit. “I know, I know”, I whisper into her right ear, now that she’s resting her head on my shoulder and crying against my neck. I’m at a loss here. I don’t know what to do or what to say to ease her pain, because I know that when I was in her place there was nothing anyone could do to reassure me that it was going to be okay. All I can do now is tell her that I’m here for her and that I’ll do whatever I can to help make it better. “Okay, I’ll help you find him, but only if you promise me that you won’t go too far”.

She hesitates with her answer, not wanting to give her word when she’s unsure that she’ll be able to keep it. “I promise”, I hear her mutter faintly as if even her voice didn’t want to say it. I sigh, relieved, and hold her tightly against my chest. Now, all there’s left is to wait for her spirit to be mended as much as possible. That’ll take time and patience. She’s going to be feeling like shit for a while, completely heartbroken. The worst part is going to be the guilt. “It’s my fault, you know that, right? I ran away just because I couldn’t handle rejection; I got myself into the mess that left me bed-ridden. It took me so long to recover that she fucking paid for it with her life. It’s my entire fault and I’ll always hate myself for it”.

It breaks my heart to hear her say something like that, more so because I can perfectly relate to it. “You remember that I told you about how my dad died, right?” I ask her and wait for her affirmative nod before continuing. “There’s something I never told you, though. I had a lot to walk you through after that so I wanted to keep it short. Besides, I didn’t want to get into the emotional midst of it
either”. She doesn’t say anything or otherwise move at all, she just keeps quiet and still, listening intently to my story. “The fight was rigged but my dad decided to win anyway, I told you that, but I never mentioned the part where I heard them talking to my dad about it and how mad it made me that he would agree to lose on purpose just for money. The day of the fight, right before he left, I spoke to him with the intent of making him see himself as I saw him: as a winner and as a hero. He did, he won, and he was killed for it. For years I blamed myself for it, and some days I wake up feeling like that again, but I understood that I wasn’t the one that pulled the trigger. It wasn’t my fault, not even my dad’s; the blame remains fully on that bastard’s shoulders”. By now her tears streaks have run dry and her heart rate is calm but steady. She’s at ease, if only for now and on a physical level. “It’s not your fault, Mackenzie; it’s only your stepfather’s”.

“That son of a bitch is nothing of mine anymore. He never was, to begin with; only by a legal formality. He’s already dead to me, even if I can’t kill him”. She’s so full of hatred that I can’t help but wonder if she’ll be able to hold her promise at all. I don’t want her to end up as a killer at such a young age, I don’t want that at all, but if it really had to happen I’d prefer it did far in the future rather than now. “I truly wish that what you say it’s true and that I can eventually manage all of these feelings, but I fear that it’ll never happen”, she confesses with a broken voice. This rollercoaster of emotions is going to leave her exhausted and feeling empty.

“I know it’s not much saying...but you still have me, Kenzie. And you have Foggy, and Karen. We are not your mother or your father; we are just your friends, but friends can also be family. They are mine, and they can be yours too if you want to”. She stays silent, probably thinking about what I just said. She doesn’t have any parents anymore, and she probably doesn’t have a home either, but she has us and she can stay here as long as she needs and wants to. I won’t kick her out, she doesn’t even have a job with which hold herself up. Mackenzie is just eighteen; she’s too young to be completely independent, she hasn’t even finished high school yet. “You don’t have to go back or anywhere else. You can stay here with me, I don’t mind. We can search for your stepfather together and you can concentrate on finishing school before looking for a definite job. And if you feel like you have to give your share you can just keep helping us out with the street work you were doing for our cases”. She sighs deeply but seems to settle, being at ease for the moment while running everything through her mind. “It’s gonna be tough, especially since I don’t really earn much, we’ll manage. You’ll pull through this”. Kenzie just answers with a murmured question along the lines of “what would I do without you?” and nuzzles her head against my shoulder. I gently grab her chin and tilt it up in order to face her. She looks so worn out and hopeless. Trying to cheer her up a little bit, and make her forget as much as possible about this whole mess, a kiss her softly on the lips, barely touching mine to hers.

“Thank you, sincerely, for everything”, she says in between kisses. My strategy seems to be working since she’s becoming more enthralled by the action as the seconds tick by. Perfect, all there’s left now is move from the floor to a more comfortable surface, like the bed or... “Although, I’m not sure if it’s okay to do this so soon after my mom”, she musters after stopping and sitting back on her heels while straddling my lap. She’s right and evil. To say that at the same time she’s positioned in such a way is making me feel contradictory things. Then again, I’m probably eviler since I’m trying to seduce her by masking it as “helping” her right after she found out that her mom died. “This is exactly the reason why that happened in the first place”. And now we are entering dangerous territory, back to square one. I try to reassure her once again that it wasn’t her fault but she doesn’t seem to even want to listen to me this time. “I mean, I can’t even begin to imagine what she must have felt during her last moments. She might’ve been so afraid and worried about me, for being away for so long; all the while I was having the best time of my life”. Kenzie keeps talking with an aggravated tone without noticing that she’s playing with the buttons of my shirt, just about to start opening them. “She must’ve been so concerned about leaving me all alone with him if I came back. Surely she regretted not being able to see me one more time before death took her away. I was so
fucking selfish, thinking only about myself and how I felt and what I wanted. I didn’t think of her”.

To stop her from going further into a downward spiral of self-deprecation, I grab both of her hands in mine and stop their aimless wondering. It’s nice, but it’s also too distracting and I need to concentrate on pulling her back from the abyss she’s dwelling into. “Mackenzie, I understand where your mind’s at right now, so shortly after finding out about your mother’s tragic death, but it’s not healthy. It’s too fresh still to start analyzing everything about it; you need to take time to process your grief. Today you have been through a lot of different emotional stages, if you don’t relax for a bit now you’re only going to make it worse”. She doesn’t seem convinced; like she thinks it’s normal to antagonize herself that way. “This guilt trip you’re going on won’t bring back your mother, nothing will, as cruel as it sounds. Stop thinking for a second; let me help you with this. And tomorrow you’ll have a rested mind with which to carry on your mourning, okay?” Eventually, and with a lot of coaxing through the soothing circles I draw on her wrists, she begins to reel back and accepts my advice for the time being. Thankful for her cooperation, I kiss her once again, chastely on the lips, and wait to gauge her reaction; if she’ll take me on the offer or just lay back her head on my shoulder. After these past weeks with all the trouble I’ve been through on the streets, sitting on the floor it’s not my go-to place for resting. After hesitating for what felt like a full minute, she slowly leans in to kiss me back. As I put my hands on her hips I drag her closer to my body, being intent on making her forget about everything for at least five minutes. If I’m lucky enough –or good enough– I might succeed for even a longer period of time.

Not waiting for any further signal of approval, I get up from the floor with Mackenzie in my arms. To stop herself from falling, she hooks both of her legs around my waist while I keep her up by grabbing her thighs. It only takes me two strides to get to the bed where I playfully toss her on top of it. She seems surprised, but not mad, which encourages me to crawl across the mattress until I cage her beneath my body. My readings of her body are telling me that she’s really into this, despite the recent tragedy. Well, at least she’ll be distracted for a while, and if I play my cards right I’ll exhaust her enough to send her to the “dream world” without much trouble tonight. “You make me do such indecent things, Mr. Murdock”, she says with a sultry tone as she starts unbuttoning my shirt. I smirk devilishly in return, conscious of the effect that I have on her, and let her shed my shirt off once she pops open all the buttons. Now that I’m half naked she can help but start an exploration of my torso with her hands. “So very indecent indeed...”

“You know that I do even more indecent things to you, right?” I whisper in question against her ear, nibbling softly her earlobe and obtaining a breathy moan as an answer. “I mean, you’re not a saint, but I’m the Catholic one here, so...” She doesn’t even let me finish my sentence, capturing my lips with hers in a bruising kiss. Feeling my muscles burn in an unpleasant way, I roll us over so we end up in reversed positions, with her on top of me and my upper-half body resting propped up against the pillows at the head of the bed. This is definitely more comfortable, and—in case she decides to forego all of this because it’s wrong in her eyes at this moment— it won’t make her feel trapped. So far, it doesn’t look that this is the case; on the contrary, she looks pretty eager to get things going, if her hands at my belt are any indication of where she wants this to go from here. “We don’t have to do anything you don’t want to, you know that, right?” She rolls her eyes in mild annoyance, getting tired of me asking her the same question every time we do anything like this. Nevertheless, she understands the importance of the question and doesn’t say anything else besides answering it.

“Of course, but what about the things I want to do?” She seductively turns the question on me in such a suggestive way that I’m stunned speechless by her boldness for a second. Mackenzie is usually timid regarding “bedroom activities”; it would seem that she’s starting to come out of her shell. Or maybe she’s just way too tired from the day to even care. I don’t mind either way; I aim to please her, after all. I get sidetracked for a moment, just feeling her fingertips trace the outlines of my muscles while she ever so slowly rotates her hips against my lap. She’s torturing me right now; she
knows it and she loves it, the little brat. Just when her deft fingers are nearing my pelvis she moves a bit more forcefully, extracting a deep groan from my throat. Kenzie is going to be the death of me if I don’t stop her or spur her into full action. There’s so much my body can take before I break.

“Tell me about those things and I’ll see it through that you are thoroughly satisfied”. If she wants to play, I’ll play along. I’m sure we’ll get out of this what we’re looking for. Encouraged by my mischievous tone, she starts telling me about the things she would like me to do to her. She begins by saying that she wants me to caress her thighs slowly, starting at her knees and inching up towards her hips. Then she explains to me –although already knew about it– how sensitive her back is and how she feels electricity go up her spine every time I do as much as graze the skin there. The surprise comes from her admission about liking how I hold her neck sometimes when I kiss her; it’s something that I tend to do unconsciously, and even though I’ve done it with past lovers, none of them ever outright told me that they liked it. Still, my favorite part is when she coyly confesses that she has a thing for my jaw twitch. I definitely didn’t see that one coming. After I do every one of these things that she becomes a quivering mess right above me, breathing shallowly and at the verge of collapsing from pure adrenaline and excitement. Her body is short of achieving ecstasy, with her mind probably going into overdrive from trying to process the information coming from all the different areas stimulated. I can only vaguely compare it to being high; not that she knows how that feels, she hasn’t even got drunk yet.

Having rendered her incapable of coherent speech, for the time being, I begin my own exploration of her body, tentatively slipping my left hand under her shirt. She seems too caught up by what she’s feeling to even acknowledge it, so I just keep reaching upward, lightly skimming the skin of her abdomen in order to produce a tickling sensation, until I touch the underwire of her bra. This action appears to knock her out of her reverie and she looks down at me sporting what I can only discern as a lustful expression. She answers by moving her arms to her back, lifting her shirt and unhooking her bra altogether. She detaches the straps as well and tells me to grab it, rip it off and throw it aside. I do as she says all the while she does the same with my belt, pulling it out of the loops and holding it in her hands. Mackenzie doesn’t move and she seems to be looking at me intently while squeezing the leather between her hands. I think that I know what she’s implicitly asking for, but I need verbal confirmation before proceeding. Rather than even letting me ask about it, she just takes one of my hands and places the belt on it as a way of asking for what she wants. The thing is, I don’t know for sure what that is, the implication leads to more than one thing. She could be asking me to spank her with it, or– “I want you to tie me up, please...” Hearing her say it is completely different than thinking it. It gives me goosebumps, not just what she said but how she said it. She used such a sensual and pleading voice that it makes me feel like I’m the one at the edge of climax.

Without thinking it through a second longer, I sit up quickly and begin to kiss her passionately at the same time that I strap the belt around her wrist. I pull it tight, but not enough to cut her circulation; I want to please her, not hurt her. She has already been hurt enough. It looks like my distraction strategy works out since she’s too invested on the kissing to even notice that I fastened the leather, firmly tying her hands together. Honestly, I just think that otherwise, she’ll be too embarrassed to go with it after all, and it seems like she really wants to try this. I break the kiss only to begin leaving hickeys down her throat in order to hear her moan more desperately. At this point, I can’t even tell who’s more turned on, if Kenzie or me. She moves her hands as much as she can, since they got caught between our bodies, and catches my slacks’ button with her fingers. As soon as I notice this I pull away and grab her bound wrists by the belt, casting away her hands from my crotch. “Not so fast, young lady. You wanted kinky foreplay? Well, that’s what you are getting”. She whines in protest but I quickly silence her by shifting positions once again, pulling her beneath me and pushing her hands against the mattress and above her head. In retaliation, she breathes out my name and I almost give in entirely, but I’m able to control myself. She tortured me twice in less than an hour; I’ll pay her with the same currency.
Holding her down with my right hand placed on the belt and by lightly sitting on her lap—as to not to crush her—, I’m able to immobilize her entirely. She’s just lying there, completely helpless and she’s enjoying the heck out of it. I would have never thought that she would be into this kind of thing. Maybe she didn’t even know about it. Having her in such a pliant position gives me all the power of decision and action, but I don’t want to abuse said power and overstep any boundaries. Carefully, worried about making the wrong move, I start touching her again but this time over the shirt. It’s not like I haven’t touched her naked form before, but it wasn’t the same as right now when she’s practically defenseless. I just don’t want to hurt her. Since all I hear is her silent moans I take it as encouragement to keep going. Pulling my hand back in order to pass it under her shirt once more, I take one of her breasts in it while my mouth handles the other over the thin cloth. She curls her fingers and toes by reflex from the pleasure, and she lets out a high pitched whimper. She’s driving me crazy, and I’m not the one being touched. I can’t honestly imagine what she’s feeling, but I can sense it, and it is a lot.

“M-Matt...Matt, please...Please, I can’t...” She begins to stutter heavily, barely being able to breathe. She’s asking for, probably, release. Maybe it’s time I grant it to her, she has been behaving well, after all. And the way she’s practically begging for it is just too much for me. I can’t wait any longer. I need it as much, if not more, as she does. Without letting another minute go by, I sit up and climb off her lap—getting between her legs— to start opening her jeans. If my senses haven’t failed me, I think that she actually prefers to remain clothed. She got really aroused when I took one of her nipples in my mouth while it was covered by her shirt. I don’t know why this is, nor do I know why she likes to be tied and held down. This probably relates in some level to an issue she might’ve had while young, but I’m not a therapist to be able to analyze the whys behind what she likes in bed and what she doesn’t. I can only use them to satisfy her. And as much as I would like to feel her naked body under mine, I prefer to make her feel as comfortable as I can. With this decided I unbutton her jeans and grab her thighs to pull her legs together. Once I drag her pants down just enough to have good access, I push her legs forward until they’re almost touching her stomach. Having her in such a position makes it hard to keep her hands pinned against the bed, so as an alternative I take off my tie—which, somehow, stayed around my neck all this time—and use it to tie the belt to the bed’s frame. Now that she’s as restricted as before and I have both of my hands free, I use them both to pleasure her in the area I’ve been neglecting so far.

After ten minutes of preparing her for the main event, and suffering through it untouched, I get up from the bed to reach the night table’s drawer where I keep the condoms. Feeling a bit impatient, I don’t take long in opening my own trousers—not even bothering to completely push them down—and getting ready; I think we both waited long enough. I ask her one last time if she’s sure she wants this to be this way and, once I get confirmation, I begin to push in slowly. The first time we did it was the night of the rooftop date; it was sloppy and messy, especially since she was still healing, but we enjoyed ourselves despite the cold air of the outside. Since then, every new time has been better than the last, but this is different than the rest. With her already grown used to my intrusion, I start to move slowly, easing us in the rhythm with long and languid strokes, one at a time. Having sex while wearing slacks is not the most comfortable, but at least I have it better than Mackenzie, who’s still wearing her shirt, underwear, and jeans. It isn’t long till we’re both panting and sweating, having increased my speed at her request to go “faster”. It’s not until she whispers my name pleadingly that I notice that she wants me to release her. I lean forward in order to free the belt from the tie and pull her hands closer to undo the belt. Her wrists are tender and they must look an angry shade of red, but otherwise, they’re fine; the skin around might bruise a little, but it won’t last more than a week, and as long as she wears long-sleeved shirts no one will notice. Being freed from the bounding leather and silk, she aims to pull me closer by the neck but is unable to reach me, so I strip her off of her pants and panties to be able to lean down more easily and kiss her fervently. She tells me again to pick up my speed, but since she doesn’t let go of me I have no other choice than to pull her body up along with mine and keep thrusting into her while in the lotus position. Mackenzie is the one to break
the kiss this time and instead places her chin on my left shoulder, which of course leaves her moaning right next to my ear.

As I feel all of our muscles begin to tense up I know that we are close to culmination. Mackenzie keeps whimpering my name against my neck in between kisses and I can barely hold out anymore, right at the brink of cumming. It only takes a couple of hard thrusts more and muttering her name in a deep growl to have her clenching around me and pulling me along in a mind-blowing orgasm. With all of our strength and energy depleted, we fall side by side onto the mattress. Being completely exhausted we agree to rest for a bit before getting up again to shower and eat something. I pull us both under the covers and arrange her lax body against mine so we can cuddle while we take a quick nap. When we wake we’ll get cleaned and I’ll cook lunch or us. This is only a short intermission, there’s still a lot for her to deal with and process. Besides, we have to figure out how we’ll carry out her revenge. We can’t go in blindly, we need a plan. Once she’s in a more stable state of mind I’ll talk it through with her. We’ll get this sorted out.

(Present time. Matt’s apartment)   |   ***Mackenzie’s point of view***

So, there you have it, that’s the shit storm that swept with everything good in my life, or well, almost everything. I still have Matt, but it kinda scares me to say that because I can’t be sure I’ll have him in the near future. Things in my life are so unstable that I never know when someone will die, disappear or break my heart, or my bones. It sucks so much, but what can I do about it? It seems like every choice I make only ends up fucking everything even more. I have no family left and no home. I broke again into my ex-house (because since it’s a crime scene the police closed it off) and grabbed as much as I could of all my stuff and clothes and came back to Murdock’s apartment, where I’m currently staying for good, now that I can’t go back to my former home. He said that he doesn’t mind, but I still feel like I’m intruding. I don’t want to bother him more than usual, so I promised that I would do my part by cleaning and trying to be as much out of the way as I can. Matt -and his goddamn manners and Catholicism- insisted that that wouldn’t be the case, but it still makes me feel uncomfortable.

We have yet to formulate a plan, though. Matt said that he’ll be going out every night as Daredevil, trying to get any kind of information about my piece-of-shit-ex-stepfather’s whereabouts. And that even if at first he gets nothing, he was adamant that it’ll only be a matter of time before he finds the right person who’ll spill the beans after a mildly violent interrogation. However, it’s not only for the lack of intel that we haven’t come up with a plan of attack, it’s also for the fact that he wants to wait until after the funeral has been held. He insisted that I have to experience this without anything else disturbing my mind. I argued that it’ll only slow us down and that it is a waste of time; that it’ll be counterproductive in case that we find him before that. I don’t wanna go in and confront him without knowing what to do and having a plan B, even if Daredevil himself is accompanying me. The fucker is on the run, he could be armed as far as we know. He’s dangerous, and more so because of the position he put himself into. Recklessness could cost us our lives if we don’t proceed with enough caution. The last thing I need –and want– is to have Matt killed because I was careless.

The funeral is in a few days; the only ones in attendance (besides the priest and the people who work at the cemetery) are some of my ex-neighbors, Foggy, Karen, Matt and I. It’s going to be brief; it’ll be more of a burial than a proper funeral, but I’m glad that I won’t be alone there. Not for me, though, but for her. She deserves to have more people than her own daughter at her funeral. And for me, although I’m thankful for those people’s support, I only really need Matt to be with me there. To be honest, I don’t know if I can handle the shame that all those knowing and accusing eyes will cast
on me. They knew about my family’s situation, yet never said or did anything to help us, and they’ll still dare to judge me for not being there for my mother on her last moments; for not saving her from that monster. There’s no need to look at me that way and make me feel like shit during a moment where I’ll be already feeling devastated (which of course is watching my mother’s corpse be buried), I already make myself feel that way from all the guilt I carry with me; guilt that I’ve been carrying for years now, from the inability to do something about my mom’s abuse at the hands of that despicable excuse for a human being. After that whole ordeal, all there’s left is retribution. I’ll get vengeance, for her.

Right now is midnight; Matt is patrolling the streets while I wait for his return. He told me to just go to sleep, that it’ll be the best option after the highly emotional day I had. But, honestly, I don’t think I can. I fear the nightmares that will harass me once I’m asleep. I’m not ready to envision what my mom’s murder was like, cause I know it’s inevitable that I dream of that tonight. I’ll rather stay awake all night if it means I’ll avoid that experience. I don’t care; it’s not like I have anything important to do anyway. I promised Matt that I’ll reassume school as soon as I can, but right now it’s the weekend, so there’s no need to wake up early. I know that eventually I will fall victim to the fatigue but there’s no rush. Besides, I’m sure that going to sleep without Murdock by my side will make it ten times worse. At least with him spooning me while I sleep, I’ll wake up from my night terror in his arms and he’ll assure me that, although my mom is dead, things will be fine...eventually. Well, if bad goes to worse, he’ll distract me in order to forget for a minute about the nightmare, just like he did this afternoon. I mean, Jesus, that shit was hella intense. I still can’t believe that we did it, that it happened. I’m not even sure from where the heck I pulled the courage necessary to ask for something like that. It was something that I had in mind for a while, but I never thought I would be able to actually do it so soon. I expected it to happen way more in the future at least. Thankfully, Matt was a good sport about it and went with it despite probably being a bit disturbed by my sudden fetishes. Frankly, I lack an explanation; don’t even know what the fuck was that myself.

Despite all the morbid foreplay (which surprisingly worked out fine), we had a good time, and true to his word, he made me forget about everything for a while. I even had a nice nap afterward. He was kind and loving with me, treating me gently but not overdoing it. Matt treats me like I want to be treated, recognizing that I’m fragile, and finding nothing wrong with it, but also believing that I’m strong enough to pull myself back together when I’m ready. He’s not babying me in any way whatsoever; he’s the same as always, the only difference is that he’s more intent in taking my mind off of it whenever he feels I need to let my mind have some rest. I really don’t know what I would do without him. Knowing my dramatic-ass self, by this time I would have already killed myself or at least tried to. He’s my savior in so many ways, beyond that first night that seems so long ago now. I can’t believe all of what happened and all of what we went through. I lost my mom on this journey, but I also gained great friends and who I think is the love of my life; someone that loves me back equally. I really hope that I don’t lose anyone else so important to me again, at least for a long time. I need a break, you know? Anyway, for now, I need to mentally prepare myself for the upcoming funeral. And after that, I’ll do the same, but also physically, for going after that fucker and kick his useless ass.

I made a mistake, a big one. I don’t know how long I’ve been lying on the floor, covered in his blood. At some point, things just moved too fast and I couldn’t stop myself; my hand collided with him and it was over. I’m unsure what time it is, and if it’s still the night. Everything was going sort of fine until that happened. And I feel like shit about it. I really wish I wasn’t bathed in blood from head to toe, and that he was still alive. I shouldn’t have come here alone. If I waited till another day when I
could be accompanied, nothing of this would have occurred in the first place.

It all started a couple of days after I found out about my mom’s murder. Once the depression let up, I was filled with a burning rage that the only way I could get rid of it—or actually just dissipate it for the moment—was by training with Matt after he came back from work and before he went out as Daredevil. That request I made him months ago about training me like Stick (well, sort of) finally came to fruition and I learned a lot. Now, looking back on it I feel kind of bad because, without realizing it, I was exhausting him right before he had to go fight criminals. Fortunately for both, it worked out and he didn’t get hurt more than usual. It was also all a big distraction strategy so I wouldn’t obsess over my mother’s funeral. I think, as fucked up as it sounds, that being concentrated on getting revenge against my former stepfather is what kept me sane in part. The other thing—or rather person—that did the same job was Matt and his constant support. Even when I was left alone because he was working or patrolling, I knew that I had him a phone call away (and a text away, in case he couldn’t answer his cell phone).

I went back to school too, which helped to distract me, not only from my mom’s eternal absence but from my obsession with retaliation against the motherfucker (I know what you’re thinking but no, pun not fucking intended). So, at least once a day for a few hours, I had a reprise from all of that. Focusing on my studies isn’t just a matter of taking my mind off of some really dark subjects, but it’s actually important for my future since I aim to study law at Columbia. Yes, that Columbia University, the same Matt went to; and also yes, I want to study the same career as he did. It’s not just pandering; I really want to be able to make a difference like him. The system is so corrupted that the more honest lawyers there are, the better; even if what they change is just a fraction. I want to make him and my parents proud. I want to do something meaningful with my life.

Probably, what helped the most was the routine. I woke up, went to school, came back and cooked lunch for myself only, cleaned a bit, did my homework, prepared dinner for when Matt arrived from work, trained for a while and went to sleep. Honestly, between studying, training and preparing for the burial, my mind was busy enough to not fall into a dark abyss. By the time I was aware of what was going on, I was standing right in front of my mom’s coffin. It was a humble one, the cheapest we could get. Matt, Foggy and Karen helped me buy it, for which I will always be grateful. It was a solemn funeral; short but sweet. Everyone that went paid their respects and—thankfully—there were fewer judgmental stares than I feared. Most importantly, it was peaceful, and I had the opportunity to experience it undisturbed. I mourned for the last time and I let go of her, wishing the best for her in the [if there really is an] afterlife. After that, there was only silence and emptiness left. I was going through the motions with everything in my life; my daily routine was just that, there was no meaningfulness to it. The only motivation I had was revenge; that was the objective that kept me going. Everything else became just bleak and I did every chore in an automated way. Matt became concerned, but every time he said something about it I changed topics by asking about that shithead’s whereabouts.

The days passed in the same manner, endless and gloomy. Not even having sex with Matt could make anything better. All I could think about was punching that bastard into oblivion, and bathing my fists with his blood. Only way Murdock could aid me in my post-funeral grieving was by helping me come up with a plan. We determined that, once he found out where my “stepfather” was hiding, we would get there separately (so no one would suspect that Daredevil is working with someone else) and confront him together. So, of course, the day everything changed and I was filled with hope again was when Matt came bearing good news. He found out the address of the shithole that sucker was staying in and went on his own to have a look at it and scout the territory to see the vantage points and blind spots (or something like that, he went on and on about security measures but I was way more interested in the action part). We arranged a day and time to go and spent most of our free time getting prepared for the attack. Well, actually I spent most of my free time doing that; the perk of being a crime-fighting vigilante with enhanced senses is that he’s ready at any given moment.
Anyway, I trained my ass off, with Matt and by myself; and although I didn’t achieve his level, I got way better than I was before, definitely good enough to beat the shit out of that bastard.

When the fateful day came around, I was jittering with violent energy, waiting impatiently for the safe cover of night to allow us to go on our quest for justice. I was finally going to do right by my mom and avenge her, and I was also going to set straight my failed attempts to protect her. As the sun went down and Matt came back home, I started to get ready, changing into the same clothes I used to follow Daredevil back on the early days of all this adventure. He suited up as well and we went on our separate ways, carrying our respective cell phones to be in touch (not only to communicate our moves but in case anything went wrong). When I finally got there and was standing on the roof across the cheap-as-fuck shitty motel, I was expecting Matt’s message to signal that he arrived as well. That’s not what was written in the text, because – of course – nothing can go right in my life, but instead an apology and a plea. He wasn’t there; he had gone to a warehouse on the other side of the Kitchen to disband some mob’s operation that I honestly couldn’t care less about. He ditched me in order to shut them down: some gangsters that sooner or later will be back on the streets pulling the same shit they were doing then. He begged me to go back home and wait for him there, promising me that we would execute the plan another day. He clearly didn’t want me to go in alone. And I didn’t want to either, at first. But as the minutes passed by and I stayed on that roof, contemplating my two options (going through with it or walking away for the day), my hardheadedness took over my best judgment and I decided to walk into that godforsaken hellhole.

The light was dimmed by dirt sticking to the single light bulb that the dingy room had on its emaciated ceiling. Every piece of cloth inside was stained by what I could only assume to be questionable liquids. The bed and other furniture were well worn and looked like it was pulled from the garbage. Essentially, it was the perfect place for him, his natural habitat. He wasn’t in the main room when I got to the window that looked out into the entrance hallway, but from the noises that I could hear I presumed that he was in the bathroom. As I picked the lock (fairly easy one), a skill I developed after years of leaving my house without my parents’ knowledge, and got inside, I heard the shower shut off and began to panic a little. I tried to come up with a strategy or at least think about what the hell I was going to do or say, but my mind was blank and being unhelpful. I decided to fuck it all and wait for my brain to rectify itself and start working properly once the fucker left the bathroom. Being disgusted by my surroundings I thought it better to stay standing instead of sitting on the bed. Besides, as dramatic as I thought that would’ve been I feared that it would’ve come across as a completely different intention.

When the knob was turned and the door opened, my good-for-nothing ex-stepfather stepped out completely naked save for the towel at his waist. He seemed shocked at first but quickly replaced the surprise with anger. Apparently, my sudden visit infuriated him, can’t be sure why...? He started yelling at me, some nonsense I didn’t care about, and advanced on my position with the obvious intent of throwing me out. As he reached his right hand for my left wrist, I moved faster and grabbed his wrist, twisting his arm behind his back before kicking his butt and making him fall to the floor. I never was really strong, so I might have had the advantage of his unsuspecting trust in his own force. Noting that, I knew (since I didn’t have the element of surprise anymore and he was aware of my new abilities) that I had to be careful with my next moves and especially with his. Although uneducated in hand to hand combat –at least not as refined as me–, he was still stronger than me and could overpower me if I wasn’t cautious enough. Making the wrong step could have led to my demise.

Once he got up from the dirty rugged floor –thankfully still wearing the towel somehow–, he lunged at me and I stepped aside, letting him crash into the window and watching as his skull broke it in part, leaving pieces on the rug. It was better to not make much more noise; otherwise, the party would’ve ended before it even started. With his forehead bleeding a bit from hitting the glass hard he hurled himself at me once more, but before I could dodge him again he caught my forearm and threw
me down to the floor beneath him. As revolting as it was to have him pinning me to that filthy carpet, my main concern was for that freaking towel that could’ve fallen at any moment and left me way more traumatized than my mom’s death did. (I’m clearly exaggerating for the sake of illustrating how vile that failure of a man was.) Thankfully enough it stayed put throughout our struggle. I thought about kicking him in the nuts, but I didn’t want to compromise the stability of the towel. And I know that it sounds stupid regarding the fact that my safety was more important than my sensibilities, but you can’t blame me for not wanting to have engraved in my mind that murderer’s junk.

In the middle of my mental debate, the dumb fuck started to say something, I redirected my attention to his idiotic words midsentence, but from what I heard I could deduce where his speech started. He was talking about my mom; he dared to speak so lowly about her after what he fucking did. I was having none of it so, telling my modesty to go to Hell, I hit him in the balls with one of my knees and –as I anticipated– the towel finally came off. I tried my hardest to avoid looking at it even in my peripheral field of view. All the while he was still talking right next to my face, spit and everything, gloating about what he did even when he was calling it an “accident”. He said that it was my fault; that he got angry because I left without saying anything and that he had “no other option” than to take it out on her. He even had the guts to say that he didn’t intend to kill her, that it just happened without his realization. I called bullshit on all of that and said it to his fucking face. The degenerate had the nerve to tell me that I made him kill her and that he had to punish me for forcing him to sin in such a way. At first, I thought that he was going to beat me to death just like he did with her, but as soon as he grabbed my clothes I knew what his goal was. No, I wasn’t gonna let the monster that killed my mother rape me without at least giving a fight. I started thrashing around, trying desperately to shake him off, but he was stronger than me and my adrenaline was beginning to run off. It was then or never, I had to get out and come back with Matt. He managed to shred my shirt, leaving my bra exposed, and unbutton my jeans. When I saw an opening, I kicked his right knee and pushed him to the left once he let go of one of my wrists while trying to regain his balance. Free from his weight, I crawled in the direction of the door, dead set on exiting the hell that was that motel room, but before I could make it he grasped my pants’ waistband and started to pull me back. As I was being dragged back towards him I took one of the broken glass pieces in my gloved hand and swung it back to try to ward him off. The thing was that I miscalculated the distance between us and the razorblade sharp edge of the glass connected with the skin of his throat, slashing it open. There was blood everywhere, oozing out of the cut across his neck. I got splashed with it, almost from head to toe, while he was making gurgling sounds, choking and drowning in his own red fluids. I sat and contemplated the gory scene like I wasn’t there at all. It felt like my soul had left my body and I was watching from a third person point of view. I just couldn’t relate what happened to reality itself. To me, it seemed like something taken out of a movie, not an action perpetrated by myself. It was an accident, I didn’t mean for it to happen, it just did. I didn’t want to, but I had no choice. It was me or him. I was just trying to make him back off, I never realized he was so close to me. I wanted him to die but I didn’t want to kill him. Matt was right, I should’ve gone back home and waited for him; I should’ve waited for another day to come back again so I wouldn’t have faced him alone. I just panicked; I needed to get out of there. I wasn’t gonna let him rape, I would’ve preferred death over that.

And now I’m still sitting here, not knowing what to do or where to go. Should I just leave before anyone comes or call the police and argue self-defense? I want to call Matt, but he might still be busy, and besides, he’s the one that left me for those mobsters in the first place. Maybe he’s the last person I should be calling right now… but I have nowhere else to go. I have nothing left except him. If I leave him, where the fuck am I going to go? I can’t go to Foggy or Karen, even if I ask them to keep me hidden from Murdock, that will raise too many questions and I don’t want to create discord between them. Their friendship is already too strained because of the failure of the Punisher case. No, I have to find a new place to live, even if it’s just another warehouse. I just can’t keep depending
on people. The school year it’s almost over, so if I can support myself until then all there’s left is figure out how to get to Columbia. I’ll need a job, or at least rob a bank. The dead fucker must have some money for sure, whatever he stole from the house. I look at him again and almost puke right on the floor. I can’t leave any DNA behind; thankfully enough I had the common sense to wear gloves. I still can’t believe that I did this. If Matt were here this would have never happened to begin with. Goddamn it, Matt! This wasn’t the time to go after whichever mafia has the reign this week.

That’s it; I’m done playing the good guy here. If mobsters are more important to Matt than me, then I guess that’s the only way I’ll get his attention. I’ll grab as much cash as there is here, also making this look not only like a murder but a robbery too, go back to Murdock’s apartment -before he arrives- and get all my things. Before anyone knows it I’ll be gone for good. I’m not mad at Daredevil; I understand the reasoning behind his choice. I’m mad at Matthew for leaving me behind at the last minute without even consulting it with me. He could’ve asked me if it were okay to go after someone else. And I know that taking down a mob’s operation is way more important to society than getting revenge on the piece of shit my former stepfather is, but not to me. If he really loved me he would’ve said something else, not just put me in second place behind his beloved city; the same city that wouldn’t think twice before turning back on him if things went south. I, on the other hand, would’ve stayed by his side no matter what... until now; until this. I know I’m no innocent soul, and that most of this is my fault due to poor decisions, but he didn’t help much either. He broke my trust once and now twice. I don’t think I can keep doing this any longer despite how much I love him. I’m not saying he should’ve chosen between the mob and me, but the mob could’ve waited a bit more. Kicking that asshole’s ass would’ve been rather quick and then he could’ve gone to the gang’s location. Hell, even killing him took like less than ten minutes, which reminds me of the corpse lying on the pool of blood and makes me want to vomit for a second time tonight.

No, I can’t forgive Matt for this, no matter how much I want to go back to him. He betrayed my trust once more, after promising to never do such a thing again. This is strike two on my book; especially considering that not only did I kill a man but also almost got raped in the process. If I thought my life couldn’t get more fucked up after my mom’s murder, I was so fucking wrong. Everything is a mess right now, and maybe the easiest thing to do would be to just give up and kill myself, God knows I’ve already sinned enough anyway. But I don’t want to give Life the satisfaction of handing myself over to Death. If anyone’s taking my life it’s gotta be someone or something else than myself. I guess that’s the plan then, leave here with all the money I can find, making it look like a robbery gone bad, go to Murdock’s to grab my things and find a mob of my own which I can join in order to bring it down from the inside. Hell, I’ll even send all the info I can get to Daredevil if I have to, I’ll just stay away from Matt, that’s all.

I guess this is the end of our love story then. It was good while it lasted, even if the road wasn’t the easiest to walk. We had a good run; it was fun and I enjoyed it. For a moment there I was sincerely happy despite all the shit in my life. But nothing is eternal; all things must pass. I’ll leave him a note with holes punched through the paper (yes, I learned Braille, are you really surprised?) this time around, unlike last when I just left without saying anything. He needs to know why I left, after all. Maybe he will reconsider some things that way. I don’t want to leave it in his apartment though. No, I want him to “see” firsthand what I did because he chose a different path than the one we agreed upon. I want him to know that I was forced to do what he himself won’t and what my life becomes when he leaves me alone. I don’t want him to just feel sad because I disappeared again; I want him to feel guilty for letting me turn into the monster I was so desperately trying to avoid becoming. So, I’ll leave the letter here, written on a stained piece of paper courtesy of this lowlife street-corner motel. When he gets back to his home and notices my absence he will come running and encounter the evidence of our mistake. Because we both did this even if we share different levels of responsibility. He should’ve been here to at least stop me from confronting the useless fuck, but he wasn’t. And now there’s a man dead. A disgusting piece of trash? Yes, but a human being nonetheless. I’ll leave
everything explained on the note, but I’ll ask him not to look for me, even when I know he’ll do it at least to amend his own sin. I suppose this is where all my dreams die then, can’t say I didn’t always believe it would end this way.

Chapter End Notes

As I always say, it can only get worse before it gets better. That was a LOT, and there’s still more to come, but eventually, we’ll have the happy ending we want and the protagonists deserve. Despite all of this, I hope you liked it, or at least part of it.

Hopefully, next chap will be up soon, but can't guarantee when. It's gonna be longer than this one and will have a lot going on, with an introduction to some new character and more participation of existing ones.
"...you know it used to be mad love. So take a look what you've done. Cause, baby, now we got bad blood. Hey!"

Yeah, I like Taylor Swift. So what? Song's pretty fitting for this shitstorm anyway..."

Chapter Notes

It's been eight months, I KNOW, I'm sorry. Can't help it; it takes as long as it takes. It's not the only thing I writing, so it takes more time to develop.

Still, this is the prelude to the end. Next chapter is the last, so if you really enjoy this story and don't want it to end, then maybe it's a blessing in disguise that I take months to write a chapter.

Also, I'm well aware I said the previous chapter that I was going to finish the story last year, but writing isn't that easy, at least not for me. What I CAN promise (for real this time) is that it's definitely ending this year.

This chapter is a bit on the longer side, up to 30 pages, and there's a lot going on. We have a brief mention of an important character from season 2 of Daredevil, and also Mackenzie finally gets to do some real work.

Last thing: as always, there might be errors and what not. I know it sounds like an excuse, but English is my second language, so bear with me. The chapter is not fully edited yet, because I wanted to post it as soon as I could. Thank you for your patience and support.

Hope you enjoy this one!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Six months. It’s been six months since I killed the bastard and left Matt; twenty-five long weeks without my mom; around one hundred and seventy-five days moving from one shithole to another, not having a real home. You’re probably wondering what I’ve been up to in all this time and –I hope not– what’s going on in Murdock’s life. I’ll tell you, I’ll tell you all about it; about me and about him, and everybody in-between. We have a lot to talk about, old friend. I missed you these last few months, and I want to believe you missed me too. You would probably be the only one who does so. With my mom gone and with everyone else already thinking that I’m dead after all this time without giving any signs of life, I have no one left to even spare a thought for me.
To give you a quick recap, I’ve been forming part of different gangs and criminal organizations ever since that tragic night. You’re probably wondering how I got into the clandestine circle. Well, I started from the bottom, of course, since I had no contacts to introduce me and assume a comfy position (Matt would’ve probably known a person or two, but since I’m sure he wasn’t—and isn’t—in anyone’s good graces, it wouldn’t have been productive). I met someone on a dingy place, I offered my company—having some knowledge on that area thanks to Murdock—, like a whore but without charging, and crawled up the ladder from there. Once I got my entrance guaranteed by sucking some underling’s dick, I showed my other, more useful abilities to a higher-up and changed positions. Ultimately, nobody expects an eighteen-year-old girl to know martial arts and be able to kick a grown man’s ass (that’s the only thing I really thank Matt for, besides making me genuinely happy for some time), so at least I have that going for me, which is nice. It really helped me out, actually, so I try to train myself as much as I can, be it on my own or with someone else’s help. When you get to know some criminals, you end up finding out that they’re more amenable than more people think; an awful lot of them offered their assistance and many that I asked (obviously I never asked everyone, only a selected few) accepted my request. It’s no surprise that some of those people were my “lovers” at the same time; an incredibly amount of handsome people in the underground world too. I’m not saying that I have every good looking straight male criminal asking for my number but, then again, there are not that many straight girls in this particular line of work, so at least I’m somewhat attractive (apparently). Better for me this way.

That’s what has been going on in my life lately. My intention with all of this, apart surviving on my own, is finding out as much information as I can about the operations of the current organization that I’m part of, in order to send it to Daredevil so he takes the whole group down or at least a particular job they’re carrying. Till now I’ve helped in taking down two whole gangs and shutting off almost a dozen operations regarding not only those two groups but three others. Still, he doesn’t know it’s me (thank God). Yeah, I’ve been moving around a lot, arguing that it’s because I’m escaping the police and I know the right people. So far I haven’t been caught red-handed, which is good since surely blood will run if anyone finds out; can’t confirm if said blood will be mine or someone else’s, though. In the end it’s just a matter of keeping my head as low as I can and avoid arousing suspicions; otherwise, I could lose my head and put everyone else involved with me in danger. And I’m sure that if I’m found out, sooner or later they’ll get to Murdock and the rest. I can’t let that happen; I already damaged enough lives with my reckless and selfish actions.

The Devil of Hell’s Kitchen has been hot on our heels since I left, with me trying to leave clues behind without anyone else besides him finding out. He knows that I’m fraternizing with gangs and mobs, but I think he still hasn’t figured out the true reason why I’m siding with them, nor that the trail he’s following is being left on purpose. Matt’s looking for me desperately, that much I can tell, but I’m managing (barely) to stay a step ahead and keep him at arm’s length, not really wanting to encounter him face to face. I don’t know what I would do if that happens; I have no idea how I would react. Would he apologize or try to explain why he didn’t come then? Would he try to convince me to go back with him? Doesn’t matter what he says or what I feel. If I want to stay on this position and be able to bring down criminal operations, I have to keep the pretense up, which means acting as if I don’t know him and even go as far as to try to fight him (you know, since he’s Daredevil and I’m a criminal, or at least involved with some). Best case scenario, all I have to do is run and someone else will take care of keeping him entertained. And in the worst case, I’ll have to act as convincingly as I can for both of our sakes. If someone, anyone finds out...we are both fucking dead. I’m not just doing this for myself; I’m doing it for Matt too, and for everyone in the Kitchen.

Last time we came close to being face to face after months I think he sensed me, but I didn’t stay behind long enough to find out if he did or not. I feared that he would try to talk to me and that someone could’ve heard us, and in that case, my entire charade would have crumbled down on the
spot. I don’t know how to communicate to him all this without outright saying it. I don’t want to be explicit about it, otherwise –sooner or later– they’ll find out. It’s best if I keep everyone in the dark (no pun intended regarding Matt). Besides, I want him to suffer a little bit; he’s surely feeling awful about it, having left me to fend for myself against that motherfucker. So, I think this is rightful karma or something.

To be honest with you, running into Matt isn’t what scares me the most. Ultimately, if it happened, there would be two outcomes. No one would find out or someone would do. In the case of the second scenario occurring, either Murdock would come to my rescue or I would be able to escape on my own. I’m capable of handling that on my own now. And even the worst outcome, which would be a repetition of the interrogation that landed me on Matt’s bed for weeks, would be better than what I truly dread. I have been hearing rumors for months about Frank Castle being let out of prison with some help from the infamous Wilson Fisk. I haven’t had any news since I last talked to Matt, and even back then the Punisher was still on trial. Ever since he has been convicted and locked up, but that hasn’t stopped the fear lingering over every criminal’s head. Now the same feeling claws at the back of my mind. It’s one thing to run into Daredevil while I run my undercover operation, and another completely different one to cross paths with Castle himself. He doesn’t know me; he has no idea what I’m doing partaking on these gangs. If not even Matt knows, the chance that he does is next to nonexistent. So, if he sees me he might just kill me like any other thug, or worse... The only way I could avoid this is by telling Murdock about it and have him tell Punisher the same, but that would be telling two people about something that I even shouldn’t be thinking about out of fear of someone being able to read it on my face.

Luckily for me, none of the groups I have been working for have encountered Castle. Although, I don’t know if that’s because the vigilante is still behind bars or they just have pure luck on their side. Maybe, just maybe, I’ll be fortunate enough and he won’t kill me because I’m a young woman. I mean, I haven’t heard anything about him killing women or children, even if they are related to crime. Who knows? Definitely not me. All I can do is pray that I don’t get even near him, at least until I’m done here or I get to clear things out with him (which I doubt I will do, as I stated earlier). Then again, I could also start leaving information for him too, if he is or will be indeed out. After all, I find his methods a little more successful. I mean, I understand Matt’s point of view, and I myself am still not comfortable with killing, but we can’t deny the effectiveness of it. Is true that eventually, most criminals that are caught are back on the streets not long after; if they’re killed at least they don’t go back to the streets but rather underground for sure.

What I’m trying to say, don’t get me wrong, is that I don’t fully condone murder as a solution; I just see its usefulness. And I’m admitting this as someone that literally killed someone not even a year ago. I know he deserved to die, but killing him was...I mean, you don’t understand, or maybe you do, in the worst-case scenario. It was horrifying and traumatizing; I won’t ever be able to get the image of him dying in front of me out of my mind. Is forever engraved on my memory. I even have nightmares about it more often than not. I’m scarred for life because of it, and I have been through a lot. So, I don’t think I will ever kill again unless it’s extremely necessary for my survival or someone else’s, but that doesn’t mean I might try to stop the Punisher from doing so. Like, it doesn’t matter if I tried anyway, I wouldn’t be able to do it; he would kill me before I landed a hand on him, probably. Whatever, most likely I’ll just stay clear from his endeavors and leave him be, which of course includes to let him kill as many lowlives as he wants.

***Matt’s point of view***
It’s been six months since I lost Mackenzie. I tried looking for her everywhere, in every single warehouse of the city, yet every time I came up empty-handed. After some time, I stopped searching so frantically and regularly. It began to affect my patrols, so I had to split my time at night. Talking with Foggy and Karen didn’t shed more light on it, and even that was complicated since our friendship started to crumble. Foggy still has a hard time dealing with the fact that I’m Daredevil and Karen doesn’t seem to believe my lies anymore. Everything is falling apart more and more, and it’s my entire fault. The Hand situation is getting out of control and I have the feeling that Castle will be soon out on the streets once again. I don’t know what to do anymore. I’m worn out and I can’t help the fear that Mackenzie’s not going back. I don’t even want to think about the possibility of something bad having happened to her. If she’s hurt because of me, more so than she already was, I won’t be able to ever forgive myself. I know she’s strong and resourceful, but she’s still just a kid in some many ways. She deserves better. I hope she’s okay.

In all this time I’ve been asking around; I have been tearing down mob operation after mob operation almost nonstop. As of late, gangs seem to be getting sloppier. Maybe it has to do with the fact that Frank’s in jail. After seeing someone that would literally kill them, I suppose they’re not scared of someone who would just only beat them up anymore. They’re probably getting more confident and don’t care if they leave any trail behind. Sometimes, when I feel like fantasizing a little bit, I imagine that it’s Kenzie who’s purposefully leaving clues behind for me to find out and bring down all these criminal organizations, but I have no reasons to believe that she would even get near them after what she went through because of me. If she’s smart enough, and I know that she is, she probably ran away from this condemned city. I wish her a happy life since I’m well aware that I’m not capable of providing it for her.

I wish I hadn’t gone after those mobsters all those months ago. If I hadn’t, she would be still with me right now; well, maybe. At least things wouldn’t have ended so badly between us, hopefully. The thing that I regret the most is that I didn’t tell her in person that I was going somewhere else. If I could have at least gotten there before she left, maybe I could’ve fixed things. But it was too late; the moment that she stepped inside that motel room, it was already too late for both of us. I wanted to believe that I couldn’t screw things even more after cheating on her, consequently leading to her interrogation and her mother’s death. Clearly, I was wrong. At this point, I’m not even sure what makes me different from the people that I hand over to the police. I’m more morally skewed than I thought, and I always knew that I wasn’t completely righteous. Now I know for sure that I’m not a good person, no matter how many bad guys I beat up and how many innocent people I save. The one that matters most to me is the one that ended up hurt the most because of me.

It was going so well; we were doing so well. And I made it fall apart like blowing on a house of cards. I was selfish and I thought that what I was doing had more worth than what she wanted to do. Even though I believe in my mission to keep the city safe and clear from criminals I know that reality is different. No matter how many operations I shut down, there will always be more popping up faster than I can deal with them. I don’t think I really “won” on that occasion. I might have jailed a bunch of gangsters but then again, I broke her heart once more and I’m sure that this time she won’t forgive me. Hell, I don’t even know where she is or how she’s doing nowadays. She has no one left, with both of her parents dead, her stepfather killed by her and no relatives that she knows of. She didn’t have friends; as far as I know, we were the only ones or at least the ones that got close to that definition. This world is cold and cruel; she’s aware of that, but she’s still only a kid even if above the legal age. No matter how many things she went through, she can’t still make it out there alone for long. God, I need to find her; I have to. I already made so many mistakes that I’m barely able to live with, but if something bad happens to her...God forgive me, if she dies, I–

There are a laugh and a high-pitched scream coming from the second floor, feminine sounding. Tonight, I’m swiping one of Hell’s Kitchen many warehouses in search for a low-profile mob boss
who has been getting more powerful as of late. The building feels pretty vacant so far, but there are two individuals in a room upstairs. A guy and a girl, and if my readings are correct, they are "playing". He’s tickling her and she’s trying to swat away his hands. Since they seem comfortable in their surroundings is safe to assume that they are part of the organization, even if they are fooling around in the middle of the night in a place like this. Most likely they are some low-ranking minions who are taking advantage of being put in the surveillance post for the time being. It wouldn’t be the first time that I come across something similar. As I make my way up the steps of the narrow staircase, I can hear their voices more clearly. The guy’s tone is playful, insisting that she stops “resisting” and they “get to it”, but I can sense that there’s an underlying threat in his voice. The girl, on the other hand, doesn’t seem to notice or she simply doesn’t care. It’s no surprise since she really isn’t that much into it—or into him, for that matter. She tells him to quit joking around and that they both need to get back to work, otherwise when their boss comes back, he’ll be pissed. For a moment I pause on my way to the room; the voice of the girl sounds so similar to-- No, this cannot be.

I walk down the hallway that takes me from the stairs straight to the room where the couple is and I stand right behind the closed door, pulling all my senses into the room and its two occupants, more specifically the young woman; her voice, her movements, her heartbeat. It’s her, there’s no mistaking it. She even smells like Mackenzie. What the hell is she doing here? How did she even... “Stop it, Markus, I’m serious. Boss’ gonna be mad if he finds us fucking instead of keeping watch over the cameras”. Her voice sounds like the finest music to my ears after so many months without hearing it. I missed her so much; all this time I felt like there was a piece of me missing. I looked everywhere, for weeks on end, and I have finally found her. Wait, what did she just say? I mean, I knew that he wanted to...but is he really...? Well, too bad for him.

Quietly stepping into the large storage room, currently empty, I manage to stay hidden from his point of view thanks to the fact that he’s facing the couch that she’s sitting on. Consequently, this leaves me directly in her field of sight and she doesn’t take long before she notices me standing by the door. I can tell because her heart, which had a steady beat while she was alone with the guy, suddenly starts beating like crazy; something tells me she’s not happy to see me. Kenzie freezes up but otherwise doesn’t seem to give another outward reaction, since her companion isn’t alerted of my presence. Meanwhile, the guy takes his shirt off and starts leaning in on her and talking in—what he thinks is—a sensual tone. At this point, I have already enough and I advance on him, not caring about being heard at all. The asshole finally becomes aware of my presence and turns around, throwing a punch directed at my face as soon as I get within arm’s reach. I easily dodge it and counterattack with a punch to the stomach and an uppercut. While I beat the shit out of the scumbag trying to sleep with my ex-girlfriend, she gets up and runs away, out of the room and down the flight of stairs. I should probably go after her, but I’m so mad that I can barely keep myself from beating the guy into a pulp. As soon as I hear a stampede of armed men coming my way, I know that she ratted me out and I just give up my plan in order to get away unscathed. I’m not really inclined to take the whole gang down, at least not tonight. I already had enough, even if well deserved, in light of what I did to her. She has all the right to do whatever she wants with whoever she wants to, but being confronted by some other guy trying to do the things that I did to her (and being the first one at that) is too much for me. I don’t want anyone else touching her the way I used to, as ridiculously possessive as it sounds—and I know that I have no right to be. Mainly because I still cling to the hope that I’ll be able to do so once again in the near future; as long as she wants and lets me, of course. At least I can be glad that I found her alive and well; that’s something, even if I couldn’t carry out my initial plan. I’ll take it for now, and next time I won’t let her scurry away so easily without at least having a word with her about her current situation. She can’t really be working with them. She just can’t.

***Mackenzie’s point of view***
Holy shit, that was Matt! I can’t believe the coincidence. Was it even one to begin with? I hope that the last one is the case because otherwise I’m utterly screwed. Now that he knows that I’m still around he’ll come looking for me more thoroughly than before. I managed to slip under his radar for so long, but not anymore. I’ll have to change gangs somehow, I need to be transferred; I can’t just run away, it will be too suspicious if I do. Daredevil making an appearance is not reason enough. Maybe if it were the Punisher, I could argue wanting to protect my life (or some shit like that) but that argument won’t work with the Devil of Hell’s Kitchen. Shit, shit! I’m so fucked right now. Everything I worked so to create and achieve, all will come crashing down faster than a building being demolished. What am I going to do now?! I need an excuse to bolt the fuck outta here and I need it fast. There’s no telling when he’s gonna be back. Oh, and don’t doubt it, he will be back. Doesn’t matter for what reason, if it’ll be because he wants me back or if he bought the whole criminal charade and will jail me along whoever he catches next. Either option is equally horrible for me and my plans. I know him and his all-consuming sense of righteousness; it’ll only bring more trouble for everyone involved. I gotta talk to the boss, invent some sort of tragic backstory about Daredevil having a vendetta on me because I killed –or nearly did so– someone close to him. Something like that; have to make it believable too, in order to be let go and find another gang to join. If I play my cards carefully, I might be able to get a good word put in, rather than go look for a lucky strike and be relocated. Hope the first is the one since it’ll mean a higher chance of being sent to a safe place, sort of. There was one time I entered a small, up and coming, mob and they tried to force me to work for them as a prostitute. Obviously, I kicked everyone’s ass on my way out of there and haven’t been back ever since. After that, I became more careful about which organizations I join and for what. Luckily (I think) for me, I found a trustworthy –as ironic as that sounds– network of criminals, and have been moving around inside it, going from group to group and always being treated with respect and professionally (I know, unbelievable but true).

At least I played the part right, as soon as I saw him in front of the door, I knew that I had a choice to make, one that I have been trying to prepare myself for since I ran away and joined the criminal underworld. As soon as Matt started to beat the crap out of Markus, I ran the hell out of the room and down the stairs in search of Joseph and the rest of his goons, alerting them of Daredevil’s arrival at the warehouse. After that, the men disappeared upstairs and I just went to hide in one of the storage rooms, waiting for the coast to clear. Encountering Matt once tonight is plenty enough, don’t need for it to happen twice in a row. His very presence in the building jeopardizes my position and safety here. Only when the commotion and bullet hail subsided did I dare to step out of my hiding spot, too afraid that Matt and I would cross paths again and that he would blow my cover in front of someone. To be honest, that was a close call. If Murdock hadn’t been entertained by kicking Markus’ ass, he would have exposed me right fucking there and then. And at that point it wouldn’t have mattered if I agreed to have sex with the shithead that is Markus; the fucker would have surely told everyone that I was working with the Devil.

I gotta do something about this, I need to fix it somehow. Guess the best option is to back down a bit and take a chance this once. I have to make contact with Murdock, but briefly, under sworn secrecy from him, and on neutral ground; otherwise, the whole treaty sort of thing won’t last past its starting point. Man, I just have had bailed on all this and go live in some forest or whatever. Fuck you, Matt, fuck you. Seriously, I have made fucked up choices in my life, but not as twisted as the things he did to me. Should’ve seen it coming from the Catholic man dressing in a devil suit beating up criminals at night. Wait! Speaking of Catholicism, I have the perfect idea for a quiet and unassuming place to use for a meetup; better yet, I won’t even have to tell Murdock about it beforehand, I’ll just have to wait for the right time. Maybe I can even convince someone to help me arrange this thing; we’ll have to see, though.
In the meantime, I just have to keep my head down and refrain from arising any more red flags until I can speak with Matt. There are just too many cogs in this intricate machinery; one gear comes off, the whole thing breaks down. And after all the pains I went through to make this work, I would hate it if it came crumbling down because I messed up one bit; because of a variable that I couldn’t control. I mean, as much as I want him to suffer a little, if this continues, he’s going to ruin everything. I know him and letting him think that I joined the “dark side” for good will only make things worse. He’ll try to “convert” me back and thus jeopardize my entire operation. Damn, I feel like I’m walking in circles over and over again about the same topic. Sorry for boring you to death with my problems, I’m sure you’re not here for that. But then again, my story hasn’t been the most fun or uplifting, so if you are still with me, you might like my story so far. Hope is not because you are a sadistic fuck, although nothing wrong with that...unless you hurt other people without their consent. Anyway, I’m getting sidetracked again, sorry. Where was I?

Whatever; right now I’m on my way to talk to the boss to be relocated. This way I won’t run into Matt so soon again. He probably won’t figure out that I changed gangs so quickly; otherwise, he’ll find me immediately once again. The longer I can keep him entertained and off my tail, the better. Meanwhile, I’ll settle in my future new organization and continue to build trust and connections. Can’t slow my work just now when it’s going so well. I might not be able to take down this small mob anymore, but maybe Matt can pick up my “slack”, it’s the least he can do after forcing me to move out and into a new group. Luckily, this time it will take more time for the Devil to catch up to me.

It’s been a week since Matt first found me. I nearly ran into him again yesterday, although in a more mundane scenario. I was grocery shopping for my new boss and would’ve almost bumped into him if his cane didn’t give him off. As soon as I saw the offending object and its owner I ducked inside a nearby store and waited there until he walked away. He either didn’t notice me because he was busy with something else, or he did but deemed it not worth it to try and pursue me in such a conspicuous way. As he wishes; it works for me, so I’m not complaining about his tactics. Still, I can’t bullshit this much anymore. I kinda miss him. After all this time alone, having to endure playing the role of some asshole’s girlfriend or hookup, I just miss being around him. The time I spent at his place while recovering from my injuries was the happiest I had in a long time; and now, without family or friends, I feel the loneliness clawing more deeply at my heart. If I could just go back to the days where I would wake up in a soft bed, with Matt embracing me, I wouldn’t give it a second thought. But want it or not, that’s my life no more. I have a much more important mission now, one that I have to see through. Not just only for my sake, but for the sake of a lot more people. My happiness can wait for a little longer, as well as Murdock.

Speaking of that, I wonder if he finally caught up to me, cause I swear I heard someone talking in the other room on their walkie-talkie about someone barging in. I really hope it’s not him, I’ve been here only a week, it would be too troublesome and suspicious to change associates so soon again. They’ll think that something’s definitely up. Ugh, why can’t he just leave me alone?! He should let go of me already...even when a part of me doesn’t want him to. It would be best for both of us. We can’t keep doing this to ourselves and to each other, it’s destructive. Somehow, someday, for whatever reason, one or both will end up dead if we don’t quit while we still can. Maybe I should just confront him right here and now and tell him to move on and forget about me, it’ll be healthier that way. I’m sure we both know it; I just have to find a little window, a moment when he’s alone or at least surrounded only by unconscious men.

Shouts and screams can be heard, followed by a rain of bullets that echoes throughout the entire
building. Something’s not right here, but I can’t exactly put my finger on what that is. It cannot be Matt, there’s just too many shots being fired at once, and I know there aren’t that many men working tonight this late. Who the hell could it be? I don’t think it’s the police; they either have an arrangement with them or they would have run the fuck away, so it’s gotta be someone else. Anyway, it’s best for me to stay away from the fray. I can fend for myself on hand to hand combat, but I’m not bulletproof. I’ll leave this one (like all the others, really) to the men in charge of defending the place and its “valuables”. All I have to do is hide and sit tight until they deal with it or it’s time to run; so, I’ll grab a radio and a book to entertain myself as I wait. From the sound of it, it’s not going to take long anyway. And if worse comes to worst...well, I had a good run, I think. Enjoyed myself as much as I could, besides the shitty life that I had to endure all these years. And at least I’ll die knowing that I did something useful and meaningful. Ain’t a better way to go than knowing you helped in making the world a better place, even if by just a fraction.

The bullet hail seems to cease and silence reigns once more. I have no idea who won, or if anyone did whatsoever. There’s complete radio silence and I can’t hear any distinct movements from where I’m sitting. Don’t think it would be a wise idea to go out and see what happened, but neither is wise to just stay put and wait for someone to come to find me because that person could be the enemy and I could effectively end up dead. And despite what I just said, I would rather keep living a little longer, at least for now. In the end, the suspense is too much to bear and I stand up from my chair, I walk to the door and lean against it in order to hear if someone is approaching from the other side or not. No sound comes from the hallway outside, so I slowly open the door and peer outside; it’s deserted. I step out carefully and start for the main stairs. The battle took place downstairs, there’s no doubt about it. Now is time to see what remains of the people I work for. As I descend the last steps I’m met with a quite literal bloodbath; there are bodies lying everywhere, covered in red almost from head to toes. No one else could have done this save from one man: The Punisher. If he’s indeed here, then I’m as well as dead. I have to get the fuck out. Still, I’m not leaving without my things. Nowadays I don’t carry that much with me nor do I have the resources to just buy a new of everything. My medium-size backpack is essential, so I have to retrieve it before leaving; otherwise, my situation will be even worse than being dead.

As I turn around to climb back the way I came, I hear footsteps coming up from behind me. Without a second thought, I start running up the stairs, not caring about being heard and chased. I’m not letting Castle gun me down like I’m one of those expendable goons; I have value, goddamnit! It appears that he either heard me or saw me after all if the heavy footsteps I can hear getting close behind me are any indication. Shit, shit, shit. I need to get out now, or at least hide in a good enough spot that he won’t find me. Or at least a good enough one that will make him give up on looking for me and deem me unworthy of being wasted bullets on. Whichever he chooses is fine with me. Unfortunately, I’m not that lucky, because when I finally get to where my backpack is laying haphazardly thrown on the floor of a dingy room at the back of the second floor, I hear the door open behind my back, followed by heavy breathing and the cocking of a gun. Fuck.

I turn around to face my death and look it in the eyes, not wanting to die like a coward, being shot in the back (not that Punisher would feel any kind of shame for offing me in such a manner, but whatever), and I’m met with a gun pointing at what I assume to be my forehead. After spending so much time with Matt I got kind of good at figuring out at what part of my body he was looking exactly; guess the same can be applied to things being pointed at me, not that it makes any difference right now, I’m going to die anyway. The only positive thing about this “skill” is the reassurance of a quick death since that’s what usually happens when you get shot between the eyes. And yet, while I anxiously wait for my last breath to be taken from me, facing my killer with fierceness in my eyes instead of fear, something in his expression shifts and his brow furrows in preoccupation. He starts to lower the gun, all the while looking straight at me, and eventually emits some unintelligible gruff sound and turns around to leave. All I can do after that is to stand where I am and look at the open
door The Punisher left behind as if waiting for this to be a sick joke and for him to come back and finish the job.

Oh my god, I just survived the Punisher! Oh, my fucking god, I cannot believe it, I should be dead for sure. Why the hell did he let me live? Was it because I’m a woman, or because I’m young? Maybe both? Or maybe he just didn’t see in me a threat worth wasting bullets on. Most unlikely, he thought that I was either a victim or a mere bystander who got caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. Who knows? Not me. I’m just grateful to be spared, despite the unsettling disappointment that I feel regarding not being sent on my merry way down the spiral of oblivion brought by the sweet release of death. I mean...if he had killed me, I wouldn’t have to tolerate this sorry excuse for an existence that I’m currently living. I don’t know, does any of this make sense to you? I’m sorry for ranting nonsense, my mind is still too boggled by what just happened. Can you believe it? That was freaking Frank “The Punisher” Castle, the killer vigilante that guns down entire mobs in just one night. He’s a force to be reckoned with, that’s for sure. And more importantly, he’s out of jail! Oh god, what’s Matt going to do now? I assume that he’ll go after Castle, but should he be concerned about The Punisher right now? I have been hearing some rumors around about the Yakuza and some of the crazy things they’re pulling off lately. I have the feeling that nothing good is going to come out of that, for anyone. I’m pretty sure that Murdock’s gonna be dealing with that too if he already isn’t. I just hope he’s okay. After all, I have this strange impression that there’s more to it than meets the eye and that it’s not really the Yakuza behind it, that they’re just a front for a bigger and more sinister organization.

I don’t know, man (or woman, or let’s just say person, since I don’t know what you identify as), the name “The Hand” keeps popping up in my mind, back from when Matt told me his story with Stick, but that seems like a far stretch, even when the city has been attacked by literal aliens not so many years ago. Still, shady ninjas in the search for some world-ending weapon or whatever feels a little far-fetched for me. But then again, as I said before, I don’t really know. What’s your opinion about all of this? I would love to hear it, or read it, somehow...Nevermind, just remembered that you can’t answer, so whatever. Right now, I have to scram and look for a new place to stay and a new gang to work for; Castle really didn’t leave that much behind. Like, at some point he must’ve thrown a grenade or something because I swear I saw an arm dangling from a pile of boxes on my way out. As if I needed more trauma in my life. Anyway, too much “excitement” for tonight, I need to chill for a bit and go to sleep, although I think I might have a few nightmares. I have no idea when you’ll hear of me next, could be tomorrow or in two months’ time; we’ll see once we get there. Until then, take care, good friend.

As luck would have it, my sort of prediction came true and two months have passed since The Punisher let me walk away unscathed. Still cannot believe it tho, but boy have crazy things happened in between! I’m kinda sorry that you weren’t there to witness it for yourself—some of that was dope shit indeed– but don’t worry, I’ll fill you in on everything that you missed, or at least I’ll tell you about the most relevant stuff. Damn, I don’t even know where to begin, and this doesn’t even concern only myself. No, there are more players in this “game” than you would think and even more than I originally thought. A quick summary before I fully dive in, what has been going on involves Matt (as per usual), Castle, Karen (yes, you read that right), the groups I have been working for and the freaking Yakuza (actually the infamous “Hand”, but semantics). Dear Lord has this been a ride for sure. Whatever, let’s get to it.

So, first things first, Matt is dating Karen. Yeah, I have no idea how the hell that happened either.
On second place, the Hand a.k.a. the Yakuza has been running the city since Castle got rid of most
gangs and organized crime syndicates, leaving still alive only small-time mobs that are no contenders
against the Japanese ninjas. Last but not least, I’m still currently being employed by those said illegal
groups, with Daredevil hot on my tail, following the trail I leave for him like a witch looking to eat
some children (okay, slightly incorrect and wrong reference and comparison, sorry about that). As
you can see, not much has changed for me in regards to my personal life. I mean, yes, everything
else going on around me affects me on the greater scale, but so far, my day to day has been relatively
quiet. I haven’t crossed paths again with the Punisher, nor have I had the unpleasant luck of
encountering any member of the so-called Hand, and thankfully I haven’t seen Matt in a long time
either. I know he’s still after me, although I can’t say for sure that it’s because he still cares about me
since, you know, he’s with Karen. Maybe he has finally accepted that I “turned for good” and
moved on with his life, still chasing after me not because he loves me but because he wants to put me
behind bars. Oh, if only he knew the truth about it all. No use in crying useless tears now, I have to
to also move on with my life, I can’t dwell on Murdock anymore.

But alas, tonight is quiet and uneventful. I’m currently sitting on the edge of the rooftop, looking
over the bay. I have one of the night shifts for the surveillance here at the warehouse on the docks.
The operation this particular gang is running as of right now is meth cooking or the making of some
other drug that I couldn’t care less about. All I want to think about is the gentle breeze blowing on
my face, soothing all the ill thoughts clouding my mind. I want to think that I’m over Matthew as
much as he’s over me, but I can’t lie to myself even if my life depended on it. Anyway, I know I
should probably be at least pretending to put some effort behind my task, but since everyone in the
underground community believes that the Devil of Hell’s Kitchen has it against me bad, they cut me
some slack and will usually give me the least dangerous jobs (also because I’m a woman in her early
twenties who has the body of a fifteen-year-old). It’s an added bonus to my already privileged status
the fact that I’m generally good at whatever I do and that I behave nicely, not going around causing
trouble for the rest like some underlings tend to do. So, as I was saying before I interrupted myself,
the sky is completely clear, allowing some stars to be visible. Despite the filth and potential life-
endangering hazards, I love this part of the city due to the tranquility that it provides under the cover
of night. Okay, fine, a lot of illegal activities are performed during said period of time, but mainly, as
long as you don’t disturb anybody, you’ll most likely leave unscathed.

Whatever; all I have to do tonight is stay awake and look around to see if anything suspicious might
be going on around the premises until I get relieved from my post and allowed back downstairs to
take a well-deserved nap. If I smoked, this would be the perfect time to light a cigarette, but my only
obSESSION is still the man in the red pajamas. I haven’t seen him in so long that I’m starting to miss
him, but then again, I think it’s best that we don’t encounter each other. I’m not sure how I will react
upon seeing him, now that I know about his new relationship, and I’m not sure either if he’s even
aware that I know about it. Just saying, it might go down badly if we meet again; with him not
feeling anything for me anymore while I still feel too much (but begrudgingly so). Guess I’ll have to
comfort myself with whatever fuckboy I can put my hands on, just another asshole working for the
local mob, thinking he’ll do some outstanding job and will climb the ranks faster than anybody else.
At this point, they’re just toys for me to play with, and I couldn’t give a shit about it. They are
working for criminals, and by extension are criminals themselves, so they have it coming. They don’t
only deserve to serve time in prison for the illegal shit the pulled off and/or the operations they helped
to facilitate, they also deserve to have their hearts broken, if they have any, to begin with. And if
they, in fact, have not, they at least deserve to be used for someone else’s pleasure. I mean, I suffered
through that even when I wasn’t a criminal. I was used for another person’s enjoyment and got my
heart utterly destroyed in the process. I would pay the culprit in kind, but I don’t think that’s possible
anymore. Whatevs, I just wanna get laid and forget the jerk that stood me up. Can’t blame me for
wanting to have a little fun, can you? Yeah, that’s what I thought.
As I sat there contemplating the vast darkness that was represented by the sea, I could swear that I heard faint breathing behind me. At first, I was skeptical about it, attributing it to some crazy machination product of my ill-tempered mind, clogged with painful thoughts about Matt and the life that could have been if he showed up on time that night. But then again, as the paranoid sort of person that I am and after months on being around a blind person with heightened senses—that usually moves without making any sound as to not alert the people unaware of his presence, primarily while on duty as a masked vigilante—, you learn a thing or two about barely-there noises that might lead you to believe that they are only in your head when, in fact, they aren't there at all. So, as one would naturally do given such circumstances, like being a lookout for an illegal drug operation, and previous experiences, I decided to turn around and confront whether I was finally going insane or just becoming way too unguarded while at work. What I found is Matt—or more accurately, Daredevil—, standing a few feet away and looking intently (I think) at where I was sitting on the edge of the roof.

For a couple of minutes, neither of us said anything and just stood there completely frozen, observing one another; then he took the first step towards me and the second after that. I briefly considered standing up, walking away, and even straight up jumping from the ledge (since I would’ve rather killed myself than partake in the conversation that was coming my way). But in all truthfulness, I didn't want to die. Have I survived so much and came such a long way only to have my life taken from me by myself because of some asshole that couldn't appreciate me enough? Fuck no. Fuck him and fuck that, I deserve better and I'm worth more. So, instead of running away from my problems, I opted for facing them head-on—or at least pretend to do so—. It felt like an eternity till Matt walked up next to me, and for a moment I had the outrageous thought that he would kick me off the edge (which is ridiculous considering that he would never kill; we know that), but as he sat down next to me, that idea came to pass and be forgotten. At that moment, I felt almost nostalgic and had the burning desire to just lay my head on his left shoulder and tell him how much I missed him and still loved him; but I couldn't do that even if I wanted to, since my throat was choking on every word that wanted to leave my mouth.

We stayed like that for who knows how long, just sitting side by side and enjoying the placid night. It stroke me as odd that he was there with me, being silent and at ease, while there was an entire drug operation going on just below the roof we were on top of. I was expecting that he would either give me a lecture or leave me be to go deal with the goons working downstairs, but he did none of that. I wanted to break the silence so badly, but I just couldn't talk. I was having a mental block and it probably had to do with the elephant in the room. Matt had Karen, and I had only my unrequited love for him once again. It was tragic and painful, and it revived the idea of letting myself slip off the edge. I was just wondering what Murdock's reaction to that would be when he uttered the first words since he found me there.

"Everything aside, how are you?" The question was quiet as if Matt feared to disrupt the silence that enveloped us with its thick blanket and by consequence make me run away from him again. It made me feel sad because it made me believe that he still cared, especially because I thought that I could hear a bit of worry lacing his words, meaning that he felt concerned about me even if just a little. But I knew that I was fooling myself with a useless hope, so I just decided to shove every emotion that I had to the back of my head. He didn't need to know how I felt about him and his new girlfriend—or whatever Karen was to him—. What would I gain from telling him about it? His pity, his forgiveness, his indifference? I wanted none of that. I just wanted to go back home, plus ten years ago, when I was still truly happy.

"I'm fine", I mumbled in response, not bothering to raise my voice since he would hear it anyway and, otherwise, would be risking being heard by whoever was close enough. No need to be caught being so amicable with the Devil himself. That would only put a death sentence over my head and would force me to skip town faster than Matt can throw one of his batons. Nah, it wasn't worth all
that trouble after all; he would have asked and said whatever he wanted, and then he would have gone downstairs to kick everyone's ass, after that leaving me alone and on my own once again. He didn't need me anymore (if he even ever did so, to begin with) and he probably didn't care about me in the slightest either. I had nobody left.

As I looked up at him sideways, trying to gauge his reaction, I thought I noticed his signature jaw twitch, signaling that nothing good was about to come next. Despite the easygoing night, I was already tired and just wanted to go to sleep. I wasn't really in the mood for it, nor could I harvest enough energy to deal with whatever shit Matt wanted to start with me. Didn't matter if he wanted to convince me to come back, chastise me for the path I chose to follow, or just felt like giving me a piece of his mind about whatever; I would have none of it. "I'm sorry", was what came out of his mouth, but I just couldn't believe it. Was he really apologizing? But for what, exactly? Don't get me wrong, I was very grateful for receiving an apology from him, but there was a lot he could be asking forgiveness for if it wasn't just a general thing encapsulating every wrong that he did regarding me.

"Well, it doesn’t matter", my retort came out more acid and louder than I had expected. I couldn't help it, there was just too much feeling behind it. “It means nothing to me anymore, Murdock”. Matt's heart already belonged to someone else, so why would I wallow in sadness? It was better to just move on, and whilst at it, push him as far away as possible. That way, I could keep my undercover operation from being blown, and I also wouldn't be interfering with his life any longer. We both needed it, to just distance ourselves from the other. It was the healthiest choice; he didn't need me, so why would I need him? As long as there were ties between us, my life would be at stake just from the danger of someone finding out about our “friendliness”, and his relationship with Karen would be constantly threatened by the “ghost of the past”. Matt clearly had issues letting go of things, especially people, so if he wasn’t gonna end it, then it was my job to do so. I thought that, after running away from him the last time, it would have been clear that I wanted nothing to do with him. Guess not. It was frustrating cause I couldn’t tell if he was still pursuing me out of sentiment or just because of some moral ground he was desperately trying to uphold. “What’s done is done”.

“Is that good enough?” His question was once again just above a whisper, but I could still hear the barely contained rage under it. He was pissed at me – apparently – for going from small-time white hat vigilante who defended weak kids from their bullies to straight up working for various mobs and gangs. I could understand such confusion and disbelief, but he didn’t know the whole story, and even then, he didn’t have the right to criticize me. He’s not my father; he has no right to tell me what to do. Why would he even care if I changed sides? I didn’t kill anybody (the bastard doesn’t count), nor did I engage in any real illegal activity besides staking out for the criminal groups I work for. The “worst” thing I ever did was beating up other goons, not even innocent people at that. And on top of it, I was doing it for a good reason, not just because. As far as I’m concerned, I have a clean conscience; I don’t give a shit what’s his take on it. And I could have told him that at that time, but the last thing I needed was for him to just become more overbearing. If he found out that I was still a “good guy”, he would have tried to be more involved, thus blowing up my cover completely. Funny for someone who’s so keen on keeping his own secret identity hidden from everyone to try to expose me by “helping” me with my own operation. And no, I know for sure that that’s what would have happened if he found out. Since he wouldn’t be able to dissuade me from doing it, he would have stalked me every night in order to keep me safe; not because he still loved me or anything like that, but because he just couldn’t leave a “kid” to wander in such a dangerous world without someone looking out for her. I’m stronger than that. Murdock, you should know by now. Anyway, back to me narrating what was happening before. “You joined their side!” Matt almost screamed in my ear, on the verge of gaining the attention of every single person on the building. The dramatic accusation was uncalled for, but I understood his disappointment nevertheless. Didn’t mean I was going to let him know. Oh no, I was going to make him see (pun maybe intended).

“And whose fault was it, Matt?” I yelled back, barely caring about being heard or not. With all the
anger coursing through my veins in that moment, raised by his lack of foresight, I felt like exploding. I was just amazed that he couldn’t put the pieces together and realize that it was all just a ploy; and even more so, I felt deeply insulted by the fact that he would really believe that I, an honest cop’s daughter, could just turn my back to every principle that me and my family held for decades. Was he really that narrow sighted? Was he actually that stupid? Or did he felt hurt and betrayed to such a degree that he didn’t give a fuck anymore and just wanted to antagonize me anyway he could? Un-fucking-believable. “Who pushed me to where I am now, huh? Because let me tell you, this isn’t my fucking cup of tea either!” Maybe that comment was a little too much on the verge of revealing the truth, but I was just out-of-my-mind angry. “I had dreams, you know? Ones that didn’t include life on the streets, working for the mob just to keep food on the table and a roof over my head. I wanted to go to college; I wanted to be someone, make something out of my shitty life. I wanted to do that by your side, but you had to go and fuck it up for everybody!” And that was saying too much for sure. I had to shut the hell up, but I couldn’t even if I tried. “I just thought, if criminals are so important to Matthew, then all I had to do was become one in order to get his attention, right?” I wasn’t sure when it happened, but I found myself suddenly standing and looking down at him with tears nearly spilling from my eyes. I was trying to hold it in so badly, but all it took was Murdock’s stupid face of regret to send me over the emotional edge. By that time, there was surely someone running upstairs to see what was causing the commotion. We had a few minutes left, I knew. And maybe I wouldn’t see him again. “Just go, before you get shot by a bunch of assholes and I have to explain why the fuck I was arguing with the Kitchen’s Devil”.

Just as I had predicted, a stampede could be heard from the stairwell coming towards the rooftop. Before the door opened, Murdock was already gone. Didn’t know exactly how, nor did I care. After lying about the ruckus I was making, the armed guys that had come to my “aid” told me to keep quiet and returned downstairs. Bunch of assholes they were indeed. Finding myself alone once again, all I could do then was take back my seat on the ledge and cry my eyes out, feeling the hole in my heart increase tenfold. I thought that maybe Matt still cared, but he was just pissed by the fact that someone who was close to him, and that he even loved –if he even did so truly–, could turn on him like that and side with his sworn enemies. The worst thing about it was that I practically confessed that I still loved him and that I was working undercover in the span of ten seconds. Fuck me and my sentimentality. I officially had screwed myself by doing the one thing I said to myself not to ever do. Damn, I deserved to be found out and killed, just for still caring about that dickhead Matt Murdock.

***Matt’s point of view***

She’s right. God, she’s right about everything. I let her down one too many times and that led her to fall into the hands of criminals. If I were there when she went after her stepfather, none of this would have happened. Basically, I’m the one who single-handedly ruined her future and her life. Still, I can’t just give up on her, even if she already has; I owe her at least that much. She was there for me after every stupid shit I pulled; I’m not going to let her self-destroy like this. I have to do something to help her, but what? I could maybe make it look like we are working together, right in front of someone who would spread the word. That way she would be forced to abandon the clandestine underworld since no one would hire her to work for them. But then again, by doing so I would be painting a target on her back, making it impossible for her to resume a normal life since she would be hunted down by every mobster in the city. No, I got to do this carefully, plan for it meticulously and methodically. I need to get close, but without it seeming like we are on friendly terms (not that we really are anyway, but I’ll have to keep pretending to treat her just like any other regular criminal). I know there’s still good in her; no one pulls a one-eighty like that overnight. For this to be real, she would have to harbor it for years, and in all my time knowing her, I never detected anything remotely
similar. I’m not entirely sure why she’s doing this, and the reason she gave me doesn’t convince me completely. The only way I can get to the bottom of this is by speaking with her, get her to tell me the whole truth. Then again, she probably doesn’t even want to see me anymore.

Still, I have to try. I’ll have to do it inconspicuously, so nobody suspects anything and we don’t get caught. But if I manage to get her alone for a short while and I keep her from getting upset, then we might have an amicable talk. This, of course, means that I’ll have to keep track of her movements and activities as much as I can, which I’m unsure if I really want to do since I might witness something that I would rather not have knowledge of, at least when it comes to her being the one to do it. I wasn’t there when she killed her stepfather, only arrived by the time she was long gone. I have no idea how would I’ve reacted if I was there and unable to stop it. So, I don’t want to be present the next time she does something like that if she ever does. I can just pray that it doesn’t come down to that. She’s smart and strong, more skilled than I gave her credit for; I’m sure that if she found herself in a similar situation, she would try to resolve it some other way. I hope so. Doesn’t change the fact that I’ll have to shadow her if I want to have a chance to talk to her out of all of this. A part of me truly believes that I pushed her too far and that she’s truly gone, but the other part still clings to the idea that there’s still salvation for her; redemption even. She wouldn’t give up on me if the roles were reversed, so I’m not giving up on her yet. I just need to convince her that not everything is lost. Yes, she lost the last remaining member of her family, and we are in no good terms either, but she can’t just throw it all away because of me and the shit I did. If she’s not doing it for anybody, she has to at least do it for herself. It might seem a little pointless, but if she regains her hope in the future, whatever it may be, she’s gonna pull through. Hating me is not good enough reason to justify all that, neither is loving me. I can’t be sure that she still does; after everything I did to her, I would be surprised if she even felt remotely kind towards me. But her words about wanting to catch my attention got stuck in my head. She could have meant that she still held feelings for me. All the same, it could have been just a ruse, a bait for me to take in order to keep following her around. If she truly despises me, that would be a brilliant revenge plan; make me believe that there’s still hope to make her change her mind while in reality, she’s just laughing at my back. I don’t want to think that that’s the case, but I don’t know anymore. A lot has happened in the last few months.

If she’s really playing me, it makes it all the worse since I’m now with Karen. Following her around will surely put even more strain in our already delicate relationship, and even when I feel that she deserves better than that, I just can’t turn my back on the possibility of bringing back Mackenzie, no matter how slim the chance is. I would never forgive myself if I don’t at least try to get her to see the truth of her current situation. Karen would probably hate me for it, but if she knew what’s happening, and what happened, I think she would understand. She’ll be pissed as hell about finding out about my former relationship with Kenzie, but she still might understand that even after all the things I did, my intention was always to protect her, no matter what. And it’s still pretty much the same. Jesus, I just wish I had a time machine so I could go back and fix everything; avoid Mackenzie’s mother getting killed, so she wouldn’t lose her and she would never have had to kill her stepfather. Also, keep her from getting involved in my work as Daredevil, so she wouldn’t have gotten hurt that many times. But, alas, that technology doesn’t even exist, not that I’m aware of at least. And even when it sounds good and tempting in theory, in practice it could fuck up a lot of other things. Destiny is not mine to play with. I can change the path, but I might be able to change the future; I just need a little more time. I’ll bring her back, even if it’s the last thing I do.

***Mackenzie’s point of view***

After the last encounter I had with Matt, I have been seeing him a hell of a lot more (pun fucking
intended), despite my hopes and fears of not even coincidentally crossing paths with him ever again. Guess only contradictory wishes come true then, huh? Whatever, I don’t really mind as long as he keeps up his good work. Since he’s been following me at least one night every week, he has been tearing down operation after operation. It’s great; I mean, it’s what I wanted all along, the whole reason why I’m doing this in the first place. But, at the rate he’s doing it, someone’s gonna end up figuring out that there’s a correlation between me working with gangs that are later caught and disbanded by the Devil of Hell’s Kitchen. If that happens, I’m toast. So I’m at a crossroads here. I need to talk to him somehow, somewhere and sometime privately, make him understand that he’s putting me at risk. Nevertheless, maybe that’s what he’s aiming for. If he really believes I’m “bad” now, he might be trying to put me in jail along with every other mobster he catches. I left him, I recently told him to walk away from my life and not come back, and he has a new girlfriend. Most important of all, I “betrayed” him by turning to the dark side. Summarizing, he has—in his mind—every reason to try to take me down. I can’t really blame him; it still hurts, though. I wanted to believe that there might have been a little trace of hopefulness left in his heart, but apparently, I was wrong. Still, I have to make him back off somehow. We need to talk ASAP.

I mean, I have to, otherwise, he’s going to keep this shit up. And, oh my fucking god, I need him to fucking stop already. Because every time, every goddamn time I try to hook up with someone, he’s there to interrupt me. It’s getting fucking tiresome. Like Jesus fucking Christ, can’t a girl get laid these days? Don’t get me wrong, though, I would be rather trying to get him into bed again, but I respect boundaries. He’s got himself someone else, so I won’t go around attempting to seduce him and have him cheat on Karen. That’s the kind of shit he did to me and it hurt like Hell. Karen doesn’t deserve that, dealing with Murdock as a boyfriend must be hard enough already. Especially when taking into account the fact that she doesn’t know anything about his double life as a vigilante. All those unexplained injuries and suspicious disappearances must be enough to try and tolerate. And that all leaves me with only one other option: screwing other people. Like, seriously, after introducing me to sex (and the amazing kind at that) does he really expect me to just stay celibate after our breakup? Oh, hell no. Fuck that, I have my needs and my cravings. It’s a given, I don’t come across a lot of good looking or skilled guys in this line of work...but something is better than nothing. In an ideal world, I would still be with Matt, but it’s the real world we live in.

It’s not exactly my cup of tea, but I have to manage. Or at least I would if I could be actually allowed to do something. With the Devil breathing down my neck every time I get as far as removing an item of clothing, I can’t really get far enough at all. I’m just asking for one night free from him, so I can fuck someone without any interruptions, is that too much to ask for? It’s not gonna be long, nor is it gonna be great. It’ll probably be decent at best and mediocre at worst, anyway. Why does he even care after all? We are no longer together, he has Karen, and I made myself pretty clear that I don’t want anything to do with him anymore (even when that wasn’t really true). What else could there be? Is he still secretly in love with me despite everything? Is Karen just a front, like Claire was, to make himself try to forget me? What’s his goddamn problem? Seriously, it’s getting out of control, and I find it a little disturbing. The fact that he’s always there, no matter what, and picks such precise moments to decide to bust in unannounced and uninvited. I really need to deter him from keeping this up. He either lets me fuck someone else, or he breaks up with Karen and gets back with me. I’m not giving up sex just because he’s jealous or whatever. Fucking cockblock. See? I get all cranky after so long without some action. Masturbation is no longer cutting it; I need more.

The worst part of it is that I have to keep pretending that I don’t know him, or that at least I don’t really know him. My story that we have previous encounters that went bad will start wearing thin some time in the near future. People will stop believing my cover story and will begin to ask way too many questions that I don’t have the credible fake answers to. Like I assured you before, if I get caught they will kill me. So far I have been saved by the fact that Murdock beats senseless my
meant-to-be hookups, otherwise, they would’ve already said something to the bosses, inadvertently ratting me out. Then they will put two and two together and realize that Daredevil is kicking the shit out of guys I was about to sleep with. Then they’ll think that we were involved in somewhat of a romantic or sexual relationship, that we broke up or whatever and that now he’s stomping jealously on any new chance I have of sleeping with somebody else. I want to believe that they are way too cowardly to admit that they were trying to get laid while on the job, but under the right amount of pressure (meaning pain) they might break and tell everything. Shit, I’m so screwed; I need to stop Matt before he gets me fucking murdered just because he doesn’t want me bangin lowlives. Why the fuck does he care anyway? Seriously, he has Karen, can’t he lay the fuck off of my back already? I’m so sick of this, I even feel like piping him in the head next time he comes around. I’m tired of running away every time he shows up, anyway.

***Matt’s point of view***

I have been thinking lately, about all the things I did wrong and the few I managed to get right. Meeting Mackenzie falls in the “Right” category while losing her falls in the “Wrong” one. Everything I did to her, or at least most of it, belongs in that category too. I became even more blind, amidst my hubris. I wanted to uphold my self-preservation and good morals above someone – innocent, at that– else’s well being, while I should’ve been protecting her. I failed miserably at it and only achieved the destruction of a teen’s life; a girl who just wanted a little love and recognition in return. I denied her that, on more than one occasion, and that led us to this mess. I tried really hard to forgive myself for some of that stuff that I did, in order to move on with my life, but I couldn’t. I pulled someone down with me, a person that I care deeply about, in an attempt to start anew, and only got her involved in a cruel lie. I’m doing to Karen the same I did to Claire; I’m just using her as a way to try to forget about Mackenzie, but I really can’t. No matter what I do, she’s always there, on the back of my head. I don’t want to hurt anyone anymore, yet I keep doing so unintentionally, one way or another. Maybe Stick was right and I really need to cut all ties with everyone around me, but I don’t want to live alone just out of fear of making mistakes.

What I need to do is start amending said wrongdoings. First of all, with Foggy, who’s been by my side since our first year at Columbia. Then, I have to make things right with Karen. She deserves to know everything; after all, she went through and endured because of me, she’s trustworthy enough. I should also probably break up with her if she doesn’t do so first. I can’t keep lying to her, nor to myself, about with whom my true feelings still lie. And only when I have made peace with both of my best friends, I can go after Kenzie and try to bring her back for once and for all. Sounds like an easy plan, but it’s gonna take longer and will be harder to execute than I think. I need a little more time to think it through and fit all the pieces together accordingly; I can’t just go on a limb and start apologizing like a tactless asshole. If I fuck this up I will surely end up alone. All I need is more ti–

“Hey, I didn’t know you were still here. What are you doing?” That’s Karen’s voice speaking, and her perfume filling the main room of our almost vacant office. Shit, I thought I would be alone here; I shouldn’t have stopped by. I’ll have to excuse myself and go home, or anywhere else; I can’t keep the lie any longer, but I’m not ready to tell her the truth. Fuck, I’ve dug myself way too deep now, there’s no way out. Karen is staring at me expectantly, waiting for me to answer her question. What am I gonna say to her? That I have been avoiding my own apartment as much as I can cause the scent of Mackenzie still clings to it? There are too many memories there, her presence remains even in the slightest of ways. I can’t get rid of it, so instead, I spent as much time away as I’m able. I patrol for hours on end every night, trying to find her, I walk the city during the day, doing the same thing. The rest of the time I spend it here (surrounded in darkness, so the light expense is less), trying to
avoid everything else as much as possible. I can’t tell her that. “O-kay, you don’t have to tell me, but I’m worried about you. You have been acting strangely, more than usual, lately”, she says in a lowkey accusatory tone, reproaching me for keeping her in the dark for so long. “You know that you can talk to me, right?” It breaks my heart that she has to reassure me something like that, but I understand where she’s coming from. I’ve really fucked up. I gotta do it, there’s not much else to do besides it.

“Karen, I...I need to tell you something”. If it weren’t for the fact that I got the Daredevil suit hidden in my office, I would still have an excuse to not this, since I wouldn’t have proof to show her, but it’s sitting there in a bag. It’s better that I pull the plug as soon as I can. Before she can even ask me what I’m talking about, I step into my messy office and retrieve the cowl, keeping it covered with both of my hands. This won’t be easy, but it’s the right thing to do; I owe her that much at least. “I’m sorry that I haven’t been honest about a lot of things, I really am”, I say once I step into the reception again, trying to stay as collected as my racing heart will allow. “But I did it to protect you”, my voice breaks a little on the last word, and she furrows her brow in confusion, asking me what I mean by that. I don’t want to prolong this more than it’s necessary, there’s no point in doing so. I uncover the dark-red mask and show it to her, noticing how her heartbeat spikes up at the sight of it. “I’m Daredevil”. It’s final; it’s done. There’s no going back from this. Still, that’s just the tip of the iceberg.

“What?” Karen is confused, rightly so, but she’s also angry. At me, of course, for lying to her and keep this a secret for so long, but I believe she might be angry at herself too, for being “so stupid” and unable to see the truth sooner. I don’t blame her, she feels the same way Foggy felt when he found out, and I totally get it. The only difference is that I didn’t tell him about it, he just found out by accident. I’m also expecting her to have the same reaction as he did, and for all of this to just worsen of relationship, if it doesn’t just completely destroy it. “You mean all this time…?” She doesn’t finish her sentence, but I can get where she’s trying to go with it, so I just respond by silently nodding my head. Karen huffs in indignation, betrayal probably stabbing at her heart. She’s standing on standing on shaky legs, if she doesn’t sit down soon she might fall to the floor. “You better start explaining to me what the hell is going on, Matt”, she says with rage and desperation lacing her words. She wants answers and she deserves them, and I have nothing else to give. I make a gesture with my hand, signaling that she should take a seat at her desk. Once she does so, I take the chair opposite to her and begin to tell the whole story—from start to end–, just like did with Mackenzie what feels like an eternity ago.

Thankfully for me, Karen listens to everything I have to say in almost complete silence, interrupting here and there to ask a question. The flurry of emotions wreaking havoc on her body is a lot for me to take in, so I can only imagine what it must be for her. Still, what hurt the most was her quiet reaction at finding out Mackenzie, the truth of her story and her involvement with me. I didn’t need to be able to see to understand that he was judging me pretty hard about it and that she probably felt outraged and disappointed. I understand; I didn’t expect acceptance from her after all. In the end, she’s just silent and seemingly in deep thought, as if trying to pull together a puzzle she couldn’t before. I’m intrigued and want to ask about it, but it’s not my place to do so. If she wants to share it, she will.

“Well, at least now it makes sense what Frank told me”. The mention of Castle brings me back to full attention. I didn’t even know that Karen stayed in touch with him. She shouldn’t have, it’s too dangerous; I should’ve been there to stop it or to intervene, but I was too busy chasing after Kenzie and trying to figure out what’s going on with her to even notice about my own girlfriend meeting with a murderous vigilante. More importantly, I need to know what she’s talking about because, if my fears are correct, she might be referring to Mackenzie as well. Not wanting to wait until Karen decides to say anything further or not, I ask what she means and what was what Frank told her. Of course, in the interest of not alienating Karen by chastising her reckless behavior, I let slide (for now)
the fact that she kept in contact with Castle. She finally looks up in my direction after being pulled back from her own thoughts by my insistent question. As she seems to pick up on my state of distress, she finally relents and answers. “Last time I saw him he told me about some shady organization he gunned down a few weeks prior to our meeting. He said he saw a young girl there and that it looked like she worked with the group, but not like a...you know”, she makes some indiscernible gesture with her hands while attempting to explain what she means without actually having to say it. Karen’s saying that this girl wasn’t there working as a prostitute or something of that like. “It seemed to him that she had a position there similar to the men he killed, but that it was different at the same time, almost like she was there but wasn’t one of them, if that makes any sense”.

I understand what she’s saying because I feel the same when it comes to Mackenzie, or at least I hope that it’s that way; that she’s there but isn’t really one of them. That she’s just playing a role, be it as survival strategy or some form of undercover job in order to expose the mobs for which she ends up working for. At least I like to think that that’s the reason why she’s there in the first place, and not because she really wants to pursue a career as a criminal. “I don’t know, I still can’t fully understand what he tried to said. I think that he was trying to imply that the girl wasn’t actually bad and that she might have been working with them in order to bring them down or something. Then he said something about seeing it in her eyes and that’s when I think he went a little off track about the whole thing. He wasn’t sure about it either, but he let her walk away”. I could argue that Frank’s not the type to go around killing women, but I guess she has a point. There are people who, no matter how rotten they appear to be, are actually good on the inside. “Anyway, what really caught my attention was the description he made of the girl after I asked him about it. At that time we already knew about Mackenzie being missing for a long time, and I feared that she might have been involved with that type of crews. After I told her about Mackenzie, who she is and the things she has done for us and on her own, he described the mystery girl as best as he could. And even when I didn’t want to believe it, it sounded like it was her. And now it makes sense; I guess it was really her after all”. So Kenzie encountered Castle and lived to tell the tale. Thank God, I don’t even want to imagine what would have happened, what I could’ve done if Frank killed her. “If she’s really out there working with criminals we have to do something about it. Please tell me you’re going to bring her back”.

Karen sounds as desperate as I feel; I wish I could appease her somehow. “I have been trying for the past several weeks, it hasn’t been easy. You know Kenzie, she can be very stubborn when she has her mind set on something”, I tell Karen with a conciliatory tone, trying to defuse the situation as much as I can. It’s only a matter of seconds before she starts raising Hell about how all of this is my fault and that I have to fix it (which is true, and I already know). “But I have the same feeling as Frank. I really think there’s good in Mackenzie and that she can be saved from that world. I just need to convince her that there’s plenty of reasons for her to walk away from them”. Which, in truth, I’m not sure how to pull off. As far as I know, she seems to hate my guts, and I’m the main reason why she turned over to their side, so I’m not confident about achieving my goal. “I can’t promise you I will succeed at it, but I swear I’m trying my best”, I have to reassure her somehow that not everything is lost, or at least I have to reassure myself. “But, about us…”

“There’s no us; not anymore”. Karen didn’t even let me finish my sentence before giving me the answer I didn’t want to hear in part. Still, it’s what I needed; I can’t commit myself a hundred percent to bringing back Mackenzie unless I’m able to concentrate solely on that. “It’s now clear to me also that you were never really invested in our relationship. At least now I know why”, he comment feels like a knife stabbing me in the chest. I guess I deserve it after all. “Just, do something right and bring her home”. Karen doesn’t wait for me to retort, she just gets up, grabs her things and walks away, leaving me alone in the empty office.

I wish I had made so many things differently, and that I hadn’t hurt so many people, but it’s too late to be sorry now. I have to focus my energy on righting as many wrongdoings as I’m still able to. If I can set Mackenzie free I might be able to atone for some of my sins. What I have going for me now,
at least, is the hope that she might be still on the good side while working for the bad people. If Frank saw something in her that told him that she wasn’t like the men he killed, then there’s a chance that she can be brought back. I need to make this right, for Mackenzie and everyone else that was and is still involved somehow. But first, I need to confirm somehow that she truly is working undercover. I just have to figure out how to do it without giving her true intentions away to the people she works for.

***Mackenzie’s point of view***

Well, good news, my dear friend! I have finally figured out how to approach Matt in a neutral environment without any of us two getting caught by any other potential threat. It took me some time to think it through, but in the end, I came up with the simplest of options: a church. And not any church at that, but a specific one, actually; Matt’s church, so to speak, the one he visits more frequently than not. The one where he grew up after his father’s death; the same one Father Lanthom precedes. All I need to do is find a date in which he will be probably attending, and before that, I’ll need to speak to the Father himself. Or, better yet, I can just do it with more anticipation so I get him to sort of reach out to Murdock and set him up to talk to me. That’s brilliant! After all, I know that he has sought out Matt in order to make him unburden in the confessionary before, he told me so himself. If I convince Lanthom that Matt is in a troubled state of heart and I’m the one who can help me, he might cooperate with me. Considering the history between them, I would be surprised if the priest didn’t have a soft spot for the lawyer. Great, now that the plan is formed, all there’s left to do is to put it in motion. The sooner I go down to the church and get in touch with the Father, the sooner I’ll be able to talk to Matt and convince him of backing away from me.

Don’t get me wrong, I still love him like hell, even when I don’t want to, but this is getting out of control. My life hangs on a string because he just can’t leave me be; if he doesn’t reign himself in, he’s going to accidentally and indirectly kill me. If things get out of hand, I’m not sure he can even save me. Still, no matter how hard I tried to push him away and sever all ties between us, he has just doubled down on his attempts to bring me back home. Yeah, despite everything, I still think of him and his crappy apartment as the only home I have left. My former one disappeared with my mother’s death, so I don’t really have anything left besides him. And maybe there’s still hope for me, for us, if his desperate tries to make me go back are any indication, he might have still felt something for me after all. Maybe Karen was just a distraction like Clair was all those months ago; maybe he still loves me as I love him. Who knows? Maybe I can just give up on this undercover life and go back to him if he takes me back and promises not to push me away ever again. It doesn’t mean that I won’t keep my vigilante way of life, I could never give that up, no matter what. But we could work together; he can keep teaching me and I could become sort of his sidekick or companion during patrols. If he’s too scared that I might get hurt, I can just handle the more petty crimes that go on at night in the city, while he handles the big mobs. But under no circumstances will I sit back and stay home worrying sick about if he’ll come back or not while he goes around the city saving people. He made his choice and I made mine. If he asks that I respect his, he’ll have to return the favor in kind.

It took its goddamn time, but I finally managed to arrange a meeting with Murdock, although without his explicit knowledge. He has been subtly goaded by Father Lanthom into going to church
for a much-needed confession. Thankfully, he seemingly didn’t question the earnest of the priest, nor his light insistence at taking his confession; or maybe he is, but he just didn’t let it show. Anyway, everything is going according to the plan so far, which means I need to get ready before I leave for the church. The meeting is today in an hour, approximately, so I need to get my bearings before I face him about what’s going on between us. I just need to do this to buy myself some more time, a couple of weeks at most. I have been gathering information for months now, all for Matt to take to the police. I could do it myself, but a) it puts me in danger of being found out and hunted down, and b) Daredevil’s the one who deserves to claim this “victory” for his own. I know that it isn’t just a costume, but much more than that. The Devil of Hell’s Kitchen is a symbol, it’s a sort of personification of justice beyond the limits and inefficiencies of law. Daredevil often gets to those who the police or the judges can’t get themselves. If he hands over the information to the cops, it’ll be known, and thus it will further elevate his status as the city’s watchful protector. It will make his efforts a little more legitimate in the eyes of the citizens.

I don’t do this for the glory, or to feed my own ego; I do it for the common people, and for the innocent in general. I’m in the small leagues, I know and embrace that. Matt has something bigger going on, larger-than-life and all that. I’ll just keep my work as it is. In this case, I don’t need to shoot for the stars, I’ll leave that to him. But in order for that to happen, I need to make a deal with him so he’ll back off for a little while. Once I finish gathering all the information left that I need to frame and expose various organizations, I’ll leave it for him to find somewhere safe or if possible I might hand it in person. But till then, I can’t let anything nor anyone jeopardize my operation. If I make any mistake, everything goes to hell. All the hard work I did for more than half a year will be wasted.

The church is nearly empty at this hour, nearing dusk on a Tuesday. It’s deadly quiet save for the few whispered prayers that can be heard if you walk down the aisle. I arrived five minutes ago and spoke with the Father, who told me to slip inside a cleared confessionary and wait for Matt’s arrival. As far as I know, the priest will hide once he sees Matthew and the lawyer will be directed towards me by one of the nuns. No one besides Father Lanthom and I are supposed to know, see or hear anything of what’s going on, until Murdock arrives and he’s made aware, of course. Truth be told, though, it’s really hard to breathe inside this thing. Or maybe it’s just me because I’m nervous as hell. I have no way of knowing when Matt will get here aside from the accorded hour for the meeting. I’ll find out once he opens the door to the confessionary and sits beside me; before that, all I can do is wait anxiously while sweating like a pig. Is it warm here or it’s just me? Whatever; doesn’t matter. It’s not like he’ll be able to see me anyway...But he’ll definitely be able to smell me. Ugh, fuck! Why do I have to be so fucking nervous about all of this?!

Before I can continue to mentally swear at myself, the door on the other side opens up and someone gets in. I try to squint my eyes in order to focus my sight on the other person, trying to figure out if it’s truly Murdock or whoever was supposed to keep this particular confessionary free failed miserably at their task. Either someone sneak past the nun in charge to usher Matt in, or it really is him since I didn’t hear any ruckus outside. If it were a person not allowed at this particular time, and it hadn’t slipped past the nun, the same would have probably tried to stop said stranger and thus I would have been made aware of it. It the quietness of the church I can hear almost everything, even from inside this tiny enclosed space. “Bless me, Father, for I have sinned”. The person finally speaks after taking a seat, and I couldn’t not recognize that pleasant, low-pitched, and smooth voice even if I wanted to. I’m left speechless for a second, trying desperately to gather my thoughts before hurrying and saying something stupid (as per usual, I’m sure you know by now). Taking a deep breath in, and wondering if either Matt is too preoccupied with something to even realize what’s “wrong” with this setting or if he has already sensed and figured out that I’m not Father Lanthom at all, I calm myself down before replying at last.

“You have indeed”, I said quietly, not wanting to seem hostile nor to drag attention to us from the outside church attendees. There’s a long, pregnant, pause between us; one that leaves an electrifying
tension hanging heavily in the middle. Then he hadn’t figure it out it was me after all, it seems. He
either is too fucking tired to go around sensing everything; too trusting of the priest and his honesty;
or too troubled by whatever reason he had to accept the Father’s suggestion for confession.
Whichever it is, beats me, since I’m on the other side of the wooden screen to read his expression
and I’m not even here to find out anyway. Whatever it might be, it served its purpose into dragging
his ass all the way to the church in order to sit down with me.

“...Mackenzie?” Asks Matt tentatively, almost sounding like he wants to be wrong in his guess. I
don’t blame him –maybe–; after the last time we spoke to each other and how I reacted, I would be
wary about the situation too. The fact that we are sitting in a church confessionary might be a little
weird also. In reality, I think I can discern a mixture of surprise, concern and slight apprehension in
his voice. It’s not actually that hard, really. After such a long time knowing him, and even living with
him for a few months, I became used to distinguishing the different emotions Matt unwillingly pours
down in his words occasionally. I mean, at least there’s no rage behind his words (yes, I know that
you are saying “not yet”, but have a little faith in me, would you?). “How...?”

“Before you start questioning the how’s and why’s behind all of this, let me just get the point
across, okay?” My interruption seems to hold enough of a commanding –yet slightly pleading at the
same time– tone to silence him immediately, which of course works for me. “You need to back the
fuck off from me”. My demand comes out a little more for forceful that I intended, but you have to
understand how desperate I am at this point. One step out of place from this idiot and I can end with
a bullet in my head in the best case scenario (the worst case would include torture before my
imminent death). I need to make him not only understand but do as I ask, otherwise he’ll end up
killing me because he just can’t stop pursuing me. I get that he thinks I’ve really gone rogue and all
and that he’s trying to save me, but if he doesn’t stop soon enough, he’ll ruin everything I have
worked so hard and for so long on. Still, I don’t even need to be able to see him to know
that he’s most likely clenching his jaw so tightly that he’s on the verge of breaking his teeth. He might be
furious, but he will regret it if he doesn’t comply after this. What does surprise me, though, is the fact
that he’s standing up. Oh, hell no, Murdock! We ain’t done here yet. “Don’t you dare leave or I
swear I will scream bloody murder!” I hiss angrily at him, pissed at his nerve to just fucking go
without even asking any further questions.

It seems that the threat works well enough since Matt sits back against the wood, probably
clenching his cane between his fingers. After a brief, rage-filled silence, he finally speaks again.
“Bloody murder, seriously?” He asks in a deadly tone, partly mocking me but still mad at me.
Doesn’t matter, I need him to hear me, not to be content. Nevertheless, I understand why he brings
such an odd subject up since it surprised me too the particular expression I used. Guess, some
phrases started to rub off on me after working alongside so many different people.

“Shut up, I’ve been dating a British guy”. The “until recently” I leave unsaid in order to gauge his
reaction, wanting to make sure how difficult this whole ordeal is going to be. The main reason I
summoned him here today –or rather Father Lanthom did– is to convince him to refrain from
following me around and interrupting me every time I am with another guy. He has Karen, so what
kind of reason can he have to frustrate my every attempt to be with someone else? Whatever it might
be, seems to be important since I can hear the cane’s plastic creaking under the tremendous force
Matt’s putting on it. Jesus, he’s hella mad after all. But, then again, why? Well, I don’t have time to
figure it out, the priest might come back sooner than later. “Look, it’s not important. What does
matter is the fact that your ‘visits’ are starting to call the higher up’s attention and that means trouble
for me. You want to trample their every move and operation, fine, but you don’t have the right to put
me in danger for it”. And it’s true, it’s nearly obvious that he’s going after me as of lately, more than
after the organizations themselves. People are starting to notice, even if no one raised any questions
yet. “I could have ratted you out to so many people by now; told them your real identity and all, but I
didn’t! So at least you could do me the professional courtesy of staying off my fucking way”. Why is it that lately, whenever I encounter Matt, we always end up angry at each other and arguing? It’s getting tiresome, really.

“So that way you don’t get shunned by your new friends?” Matt asks with boiling fury, which can be heard –barely contained– in his tone of voice. I get that he’s pissed about the situation, and probably feels a little useless and hopeless about it too, but he needs to back the fuck off already. Just this fucking meeting that took a lot of preparations and security measures to be taken into account is highly dangerous for me to be doing. Anyone finds out, and I mean anyone, and I’ll leave proverbial Hell for the literal one. I’m not asking for much, am I?

“No, so you don’t get me fucking killed!” My response comes out way too higher than I intended, and it sounds exasperated as well. This is like dealing with a very stubborn child that doesn’t want to take a bath or something. It’s not that hard to understand, come on! It’s simple as that: you keep showing up at my workplace, I’ll get shit for it. And death, and pain; a lot of fucking pain. “Listen, Matt. I know your intentions are good, if a little misguided, but what you are doing isn’t just dangerous for you, okay? It’s a risk I have to unwillingly take because you’re on a crusade that won’t get you anywhere. I think that you already know this”, I try to explain as calmly as I can, not wanting to get mad again and have him dismiss me because I get emotional about this instead of rational. “Just”, I can’t help de sigh that escapes me, but I really need to make him see reason, “stave off from pursuing me for at least a couple of weeks, that’s all I’m asking here”. Then I will be hopefully done and maybe we can sort things out between us. “I’m not saying to give up patrolling completely, just lay low when it comes to me and the people I work for”. Of course, I can’t take Daredeviling from him for so long, I don’t even want to; all I need is for him not to show up wherever I am every goddamn night for a few weeks until all is done. “I don’t know, if there’s no one else to bother but us, then take Karen on a date or something”. Maybe that’ll be incentive enough to distract him a little, for at least an evening when all other criminals are either in jail or off the street, preferring to keep intact instead of conducting business.

“How did you know about…?” He doesn’t finish the question, but I get what he’s trying to ask. Taking pity on him I just tell him that he isn’t the only with a lot of resources for information gathering. “Well, I guess I’ll have to find something else then since we are no longer together”, he comments in a low voice, one filled with hope and regret at the same time. I would like very much to say that his statement doesn’t affect me at all, but we both know it isn’t true. Still, I restrain myself from reacting in any kind of way, not wanting to give him any leads into thinking that there’s hope between us. That just might muddle everything that I’ve been trying to work here for the last half hour. Whatever, I need to focus now, the deal isn’t sealed yet.

“Whatever rocks your boat, Murdock. Just stay off my back for a while”, I tell him in my most neutral voice, hoping that my heart isn’t giving anything away. All I get in return is a quiet and reluctant “okay”, coming from the other side of the screen. Having his positive assurance that he’ll stay away for some time, I conclude that the meeting is done. “You should probably stay here a minute or two more, to not raise any suspicion. Remember, there’s always eyes and ears everywhere”, is the last thing I say before opening the door of the confessionary and walking out of the church. I nod silently at Father Lanthom as I take my leave, having previously thanked him for his assistance in this whole ordeal. As I intend to cross the archway leading to the entrance door, however, a strong arm stops me. I don’t need to turn around to know who’s the person holding me back; I’m well acquainted with said person’s strength. Nevertheless, I do so not only to humor him but to glare up at the sightless eyes, well aware that he’ll sense my frustration anyway. “What? Didn’t you heard what I last said?” I asked in a hushed, yet irate tone, already trying to look around to see if anyone noticed our strange interaction.

“Two weeks, and then I’ll be back”, he grunts out harshly, as if admonishing a misbehaving child.
“I know there’s still good in you, Mackenzie. I’m not giving up”. He sounds so broken, that I almost give in and hug him. But I got to remain strong, for both of our sakes. Somebody ought to put a limit to this before it gets us killed. Without saying anything else, not trusting the steadiness of my voice, I nod in response and pry my arm off, walking out of the church and into the busy street without even glancing back. I don’t need to, in reality, cause I know him well enough to guess that he’s probably still standing there, one hand holding the cane while the other it’s in his coat’s pocket. Head hanging low, troubled eyes hidden by blood-tinted sunglasses, and jaw twitching amidst all the unreleased tension his body is holding. I’m sure he wants to run after me, taking me back to his apartment even by force and talk some sense into my head. He’s not gonna do it, though, because at least he respects me that much now. He knows that this is my choice, as being Daredevil is his, and that if I don’t get a say about his lifestyle, he doesn’t get one about mine.

Good news, my dearest friend! Matt kept to his word (despite the fact that I highly doubted that he would) and he gave me the space needed to gather all the information necessary in order to have enough evidence to take to the police. Photos, transcripts and originals, recording, and more I have been pulling together piece by piece not only to take down organizations still working but to finally process those which have been already caught. I’m scared shitless about doing this –as you can probably guess–, because even if I hadn’t gotten caught after all this time, there’s still a high chance that someone might put two and two together and figure out that I had something to do with it. I mean, even if I’m using the excuse that I’m tired of running into Daredevil and that because of that every gang I work in eventually gets taken down, in order to leave the criminal underworld behind, it still doesn’t guarantee that I’ll be completely free. There could always be someone out here trying to get me, even if I say that I’ll be skipping town to avoid the Kitchen’s Devil.

I know that I can defend myself and that if I ask I’ll probably get Matt to watch my back as well, but it’s still a great risk to take. But, it’s all in the name of protecting the city and its inhabitants from the cruel claws of crime, so I can’t really complain that much, honestly. Don’t get me wrong, I’m not delusional to the point where I think that with this I will be getting New York rid of all crime once and for all; I’m well aware that taking down a mob only opens up space for another to rise in its place, but a little always goes a long way. And even when I’ll probably won’t be working undercover anymore, doesn’t mean that I’m retiring. I still don’t know what the future holds for me, or what I’ll be doing –even what I want to do–, but I’m hopeful that after reaching rock bottom, the only way I can go is back up.

Anyway, right now I’m actually waiting on Murdock to show up. Well, Daredevil, more accurately. I left a note by his place yesterday, telling him to meet me on his rooftop the next evening. It was in braille, hand made, so don’t @ me, okay? I’m not that big of an asshole. He should pop up any minute now, probably wondering how I got here in the first place if he hasn’t already remembered that he gave me a key long ago and figured out that I didn’t throw it away. So, no, I didn’t break in. Again, I’m nicer than you might think. All I have to do is give him the bag with all the stuff and then I’ll be merrily on my way. Only once he takes it to the authorities and the respective mobs are put behind bars will I dare to come back around, but not before then. For safety reasons, of course, mine and his.

It doesn’t take long before I see the familiar red and black outfit appear from the door leading to the roof. I’m sitting on the ledge, like that time I yelled at him about my unfulfilled dreams. I needed to put some space between us, as to not give him the “wrong” idea just yet. Once he notices where I am, he takes a few steps closer. Before he reduces the distance between us considerably, I throw the
bag as far as I can in his direction. It lands near his feet, and he only looks at it— I presume—questioningly. I don’t give him time to ask, anyway, telling him straight out that it’s full with information and evidence about all the gangs I worked for and then some. He then stares at me with his mouth hanging open a little, as if trying to grasp the depth of what I just revealed to him. He must be a bit shocked by the truth, but also relieved at finally getting confirmation (from myself) about the real side I have been on all this time. Apparently speechless, he takes the bag and limits himself to nod in acknowledgment, following my advice of taking it to a trustworthy policeman—Brent, most likely— as soon as possible. Still, as he turns around to leave, he pauses in his step, hesitating about leaving without asking what he really wants to know. Luckily for him, I already know what that is, so I decide to spare him. I finally tell him to not worry, and that once that the rubble has settled, he’ll see me again. With that last reassurance, he takes off as fast as he arrived, and as quietly as well. It’s only a matter of time before we meet again.

Chapter End Notes

Well, that was a lot. I know it's a little choppy and can seem cramped, due to all the changes in POVs and the time jumps. But the chapter was getting too long, so I saw no other option than to put it together like that. I hope you were able to enjoy it nevertheless.

Hope to not have disappointed anyone with how little of a cameo Frank has, but although wanting to include him somehow in the story, I felt that if I gave him a bigger part in the story, then the fanfic itself would become longer by default. As much as I LOVE this story, I really want it to end at the same time, so I can move on to work on other things. It’s been three years since this journey began, anyway.

Thanks for reading, as always, and feel free to leave a comment saying whatever you want.
A fallen angel’s redemption

Chapter Summary

"And we have finally arrived at the end... I can't believe it, can you? Guess it's time then."

Chapter Notes

Yes, it took me six months to reach the end, but in all honesty, it ended up being longer than I anticipated. Anyway, here it is; hope you enjoy it. It is more subdued than previous chapters, even if a bit dragged out. It was hard to finish this whole story after three years, but I'm happy with it and how it turned out. Also, as I promised in chapter nine, I managed to end it this year, after all, so I'm really proud of myself for accomplishing that goal.

This one is more of a long conversation than anything else, in which both Matt and Kenzie figure things out together and make amends.

Last thing, I hope there aren't many mistakes, but if you notice any, feel free to let me know. I always appreciate that kind of help.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

And a matter of time it was, alongside a ton of arrests, testifications and general chaos in the criminal world. As soon as Daredevil took to Brent all the intel I gave him, hell broke loose among gangs. A lot of different operations got shot down, and a bunch of mobsters were put behind bars, waiting for their respective trials. I was put under witness protection since Foggy managed to get me a deal with the NYPD. As far as they are concerned, I was only the girlfriend of some of the men that worked low-ranking posts inside each organization respectively, and as such didn't take direct part in any of the crimes. All I had to do is testify against all my former employers and coworkers and they let me walk free, always providing that my identity remains hidden from public knowledge, that case no one will come after me. It took its sweet time, but justice was dealt and charges were placed over each participant accordingly. Anyway, most of the hate ended up falling on Daredevil; apparently, no one suspected me, even after knowing that I got away scathe free. Still, not everything is over yet. There’s one last thing left for me to do.

At the end of the day, I have to confront him on my own. And that’s what I’m here to do. I’m just chilling on one of Matt’s armchairs, waiting for him to come back from the courtroom. He has been working on some pro bono cases since his fall-out with Foggy. Hopefully, me making amends with him and at least trying to fix our problems will inspire Murdock to do the same with his best friend and recent ex-girlfriend as well. I cannot say that I don’t wish to go back to the days when the four of us worked together –albeit unbeknownst to Matthew—. Those were simpler times when I still had my mom and all the Matt/Daredevil drama-related part of my life wasn’t as fucked up as it ended up
being. If I could go back in time, I’ll do it without a second thought, to erase all my past mistakes. Maybe that way I would still have my mother nowadays. But this is not the time to think about the “what ifs”, I need to concentrate on facing Murdock. He will be home any minute now, and we need to have a serious discussion about the past, the present, and the future.

It’s when I’m starting to get bored and unintentionally fall asleep that I finally hear Murdock’s steps reach the front door of the apartment and his keys jingling in his hands while he makes his way inside. It seems that he was immersed in something rather interesting, since he didn’t notice my presence until he was standing in front of me, across the living room. He looks shocked, but I can’t tell if in a bad or good way. Only when his tense shoulders slack in what appears to be relief, do I get a positive indication that he’s happy that I’m here. Still, he doesn’t say anything; not even a sigh escapes him, to be honest. Although, whatever has possessed him takes complete control of his body and makes him stride hurriedly across the space in between us, planting him just inches away from me in an instant. Before I get to make a snide comment about the action, Matt grabs my face with his right hand and lifts it almost at a 90-degree angle to kiss me passionately. Needless to say, I’m way too surprised to react at first, but when I manage to regain my senses, I end up slapping him hard on the left cheek. A couple of seconds go by in utter silence, with neither of us doing or saying anything.

“I probably deserve that, after all”, Matt says, half-stunned and half-hurt, while he holds his reddening cheek with his right hand –meanwhile, the left one is still carrying his cane– and massages his aching jaw. He should’ve “seen” it coming, I suppose, but he surely was too invested in what he was doing to even notice my hand coming up. I don’t blame him, I’m as surprised, if not more, about my reaction. I didn’t mean to hit him like that, not really, it was just a reflex born out of similar situations I had to put up with while working for and with criminals these past few months. Bad guys don’t usually care for consent when it comes to getting what they want, so usually one can only make a statement in the sole language they respond to: violence. Still, Murdock didn’t deserve that; I wanted the kiss as much as he did.

“Sorry, force of habit”, I try to explain, with a meekly sounding voice. I truly feel ashamed for having slapped him in the face so harshly and abruptly when he was just demonstrating how much joy he felt at seeing me back here. Nevertheless, I would be a hypocrite if I denied that I feel just the tiniest bit of satisfaction at seeing what the act causes. The darkest and deepest part of me, the one that still resents Matt in the least, can’t help but revel in his pain, as little or great as it may be. I wish to bury that part of me and leave all the bad shit between us behind for good, but it might take longer than I anticipated at first, and it might be more difficult as well. I just want things to go back to the way they were when everything was good with us, but it won’t be that easy.

Anyway, Matt’s response to my apology comes in the form of an expression showing a mixture of concern and confusion, right before it begins to morph into one full of anger and disgust. I can tell by the way he seems to be looking me in the eyes (almost) through his sunglasses as if searching for the truth, that he’s already fearing whatever might come out of my mouth next. Well, I get it. If the roles were reversed, I would feel the same way. But honestly, he can’t have been hoping all this time that I have been treated like a princess by the men I worked for. “Don’t look so naïve, Murdock. You know how it can be for a girl in the criminal underworld. It ain’t pretty, but I’m tough”, I reply in a matter-of-fact tone, with a bit of smugness coming up in my voice by the end of the sentence. After all, I did manage to hold my own amongst criminals for a long time. I appreciate the concern, but we both know I have been through worse already.

And yet Matt can only raise both eyebrows in response, surprised by my nonchalance, but not really since he’s aware of what I have survived in the past. Still, he seems to be a bit unsure of what exactly I went through these last months. I get it; I mean, he doesn’t really know what went down while he wasn’t there trying to bust his ass in. I guess that all he can do is hope that whatever
happened, didn’t surpass my piece-of-shit-stepfather’s attempt to rape me. Lucky for me, nothing was as awful as that. I suppose that if that were the case, he would have to go on a severe and bloody manhunt, looking for every guy that dared to hurt me. How lovely he can be sometimes.

“So...had to slap a lot of guys then?” Matt asks awkwardly, trying to sound unworried and completely failing at it, ultimately coming across as rather pissed off about it. This, of course, results in the clenching of his jaw and the return of the infamous jaw twitch that I love oh so fucking much. Long live Murdock’s jaw twitch! Wait, sorry, I got sidetracked. Where was I? Right. The demonstration of concern ends up being more endearing than annoying, which surely is making me look at him curiously –almost lovingly, as some might say–, with some mirth dancing in my eyes. I’m just delighted and relieved to finally be back here, with him. Not that he’ll be able to tell from my nearly blank face, but it doesn’t matter. The sentiment remains; I really do believe that I’m taking the first steps in taking my happiness back into my hands. As long as everything works out with Matthew in the end, I’m certain that I’ll be okay.

“Nah, some of them I just kneed in the crotch”, it’s what my natural-sounding, no-big-deal kinda answer ends up being when I try to minimize the whole thing as much as I can. There’s no need to blow this out of proportion, after all. If I don’t make light of the harassment I sometimes had to deal with, he’ll go on a rampage, seeking out criminals that are already or on their way behind bars. I mean, Matt’s right anyway, I have gone through worse shit since I started doing this. And knowing that I’ll just keep going in either a lower or higher degree, there’s no avoiding getting hurt while at it. This is my life, I just have to deal with it and so does he. Or at least that’s what I’m expecting, cause there’s no way in hell that, now that I’m back, I’ll play the content housewife while Murdock gets to put bad people in jail through the legal system illegally as well. I’m not necessarily asking for partnership here, just for mutual respect and acceptance; maybe even a little support if possible. Still, despite my worries of Matthew going ballistic after what he heard, he just can’t help the small chuckle that escapes him, sounding wholehearted and nostalgic, making him look cute and shit. It’s the kind of thing that pulls a broad and beautiful grin (which shows his pearly whites) that takes over the lower half of his face. This just makes me feel rejoiced somehow; the fact of seeing such a radiance emanating from him after so long fills my heart to the brim. It’s even fucking contagious, to tell the truth. And the best part is that it washes me over with a sense of comfort that makes me think that everything is finally going back to normal. At last, some well-deserved peace.

“Since we are already on this subject”, Matt says while taking a seat opposite me, on the couch, and unbuttoning his blazer, “would you care about telling me exactly what you went through since you ran away?” The question is a simple and expected one, but the answer it’s more complicated and might end up being a tad more surprising than he may have thought. Still, I can’t deny his request. It’s not like he has a right to know, but he’s of course curious; who am I to deny him some explanations about what I’ve been doing these last few months? (I know, I am exactly the main person who can tell him that it’s none of his business, but he was already there present for some of it, so I might as well just tell him the whole story and clear out some things while I’m at it, amirite?). And thus I begin retelling with detail the story of how I ended up working for some of New York’s most dangerous gangs, all the while Murdock listens enthralled. It’s kinda fun witnessing all the different emotions playing on his face, and the way these change his expression every time. What’s most interesting though, is watching how his whole body goes lax as he lets out a long sigh of relief right after I assure him that everything that I did was for the greater good and that my plan since the beginning was to turn them all in. It makes me feel a little bad because the implication was that even after I gave him all the evidence and information necessary to put in jail half of the city’s criminal organizations, he still thought that I might have done it for the wrong reasons.

It’s only when I come around to the recent past that I see the reappearance of his jaw twitch, just in time when I start to mention the many visits he paid me while I was trying to get laid. The lingering
jealousy might seem cute to anyone else, and maybe sometime in the future I’ll find it as much as well, but right now it still irritates me. We were nothing, he had no right to intervene like that, and I don’t shy away from telling him exactly what I think of it. As expected, he doesn’t take it very well. Still, I won’t let this slide, he needs to be put in place. “Of course it pissed me off, Matt. I wasn’t trying to marry any of them, I just wanted a quick fuck!” I say in an attempt to reason with him and get through his thick skull that he wasn’t justified in what he did. He, in turn, tries to “make me understand” by using excuses such as them being too violent or the risk of getting an STD as if I didn’t know all of that back then. I did, and so I took the required precautions to avoid that kind of situation, to begin with. I’m not a child, Murdock! “I don’t care, it’s a matter of free will. I didn’t go around stopping you from having sex with Karen because I was jealous or whatever. I just let you be!”

There’s a heavy silence settled between us, one that neither seems eager to break, but ultimately – although a bit sheepishly– is Matthew who dares speak up again, answering my accusation. “Karen and I... We never really...” And then he just shuts his mouth and looks towards the floor, his jaw tightening in discomfort. So, they never fucking? For real? Well, gotta be honest, that makes his cockblocking just a little bit less bad. I mean, it’s not like he was refraining me from having sex while he was getting it on with Miss Page, that would’ve been infuriating, to say the least. Maybe that was part of the reason why he did it then. Since he couldn’t do it with her (for whatever reason, I don’t even need to know really), and wanted to actually do it with me –but I was trying to do it with other guys– he saw it fit to just deny us all from satisfying our thirst for sex. That’s still an asshole move in my book anyway. And it doesn’t make it okay either. At noticing my baffled silence, Matt decides to clarify a bit further. “She broke up with me before we could get that far”, he says quietly, as if regretting not having the opportunity, but something tells me that that’s not it. I think that he’s just feeling guilty for being with Karen in the first place, probably because –despite his best intentions (which often turn out making everything worse)– he used her to get over me as he did with Claire. He’s a bastard for doing so, even when I might not be the best suited to judge him so hard for it since I tried something similar with those low-ranking criminals, but particularly because he did it to his friends, not just some random girl (which would still have been awful) or someone who “deserved” it.

I won’t pretend that it doesn’t make me feel just a tad giddy the fact that he hasn’t gotten over me even after being with two separate women who are arguably more beautiful, normal, functioning and perhaps even better suited to be with him than me. No, that’s actually the best outcome for me, because now I get to be again with him; no love ever lost between us. And I won’t lie to myself saying that I feel guilty over any of this. I want him, and I want him to want me as bad. I don’t really care how many broken hearts there have to be in our way, I already paid my karma with interests anyway. I deserve some happiness, and if it comes in the form of Murdock’s love, then so be it. After a few more minutes of silence, he ends up talking again, only this time to ask for forgiveness. He doesn’t specify, so I just take it as him apologizing for every wrongdoing committed on his part. But just when I’m about to tell him I forgive him, he does add something. He clarifies that he’s most sorry of all about what happened to me regarding my piece-of-shit-stepfather. Not wanting to let the memories of his death (and my mom’s death) ruin the improved mood I have going on, I just tell him that it’s all in the past now and that I care more about moving forward.

“Can I just like”, I say before sighing, tired after the long day (more like year) I had, “be honest with you?” The drawled out question is barely necessary since I’ve always known that I can speak my mind freely in front of him, no matter what. And yet I anxiously wait for his silent nod of agreement. “Sometimes I feel a little stupid for still loving you”. There, I said it; what’s been eating at me for the last few months, a constant shadow at the back of my head. But it’s true, you know? I do feel like an idiot for loving him after all the things he has done to me, on purpose, no matter what his intentions were at that time. And still...I love him so fucking much that I feel like dying if I’m not
with him. My life was happy and then okay, after my father’s passing; but ever since I met Matt, despite all the shit I went through because of him, there’s this special radiance illuminating my every day that only he provides me with. There’s no denying it, that sensation is here to stay, has been for a long time, and it’s only growing stronger.

Nevertheless, my comment doesn’t sound so good (especially since I didn’t voice all the things that I mentally followed that comment with...my bad only you got to hear it, or read it? I don’t know) and it shows in his pained expression. “Well, that hurts”, he admits with a grimace and a fake light tone, trying to mask just how much what I said wounded him. “But I understand. I’ve done awful things to you, so I don’t blame you for feeling that way”, he explains in all honesty. I know that he sometimes has a hard time admitting when he’s wrong, but I’m glad he’s taking the high road here and just making amends for once, instead of trying to spin it somehow in his favor while making me feel bad about something. Guess there’s still hope for us after all then. Glad to know I won’t have to go out looking for a new boyfriend, because I really need a place to crash, and I don’t want to revert to the lowlives I hung out with. I’ll rather stay with my lawyer.

“But speaking in all seriousness, how have you really been since…” Matt doesn’t finish the sentence because there’s no need for it, the implication is enough and I get it immediately, without further explanation. He means the night I killed my stepfather when he failed to show up as planned because he went after a mob. Well, not gonna lie, it’s been rough, actually. Between the constant nightmares that either center around my mother’s death and the ones where I relive that night but don’t manage to kill him in time...can say for sure that it hasn’t been a blast. That’s also partly the reason why I tried so hard to get laid with someone, just to get rid of that horrible aftertaste the nightmares left me with. All that together with the stress of having to live undercover amongst criminals for months while avoiding Murdock at the same time, it was hell for sure. I’m certain that I will never be able to fully recover from all those traumatic events; I’ll cope with them at best, but that’s only as long as I’m able to pull through and concentrate on other things. Of course, Matt’s help and involvement in my life from now on will play a huge part in my healing path. So, in the end, only time will tell how good I’ll be. I tell him as much, also citing how hurt and betrayed I felt when he didn’t come to my aid that night. He looks down in shame, probably feeling awful and even regretting not being there for me at that time, but what’s been done can’t be undone. Let’s just hope that he doesn’t fuck up that much ever again, at least not regarding me.

“In the end, the only way out I saw from something like that ever happening again was to join in the action, you know? I thought that, maybe, if I was as involved as you in fighting crime then I wouldn’t be as much of a second thought to you”, I tell him in all honesty, not being afraid of voicing my belief that I always come second to his vigilantism. He looks pained and maybe even ashamed, but it’s hard to tell when he’s still wearing his sunglasses. “Like, seriously, I even concluded that I had to do something as dramatic as infiltrating the criminal underworld to get back your attention, not only because that was the right thing to do”. He doesn’t say anything, and I don’t think there’s anything he could say or do about it. It’s just a fact; that was my train of thought at the time, and it still kind of is. Doesn’t matter though, I have come to really understand the importance of being on the battlefield, fighting for justice. One thing is going after bullies, another entirely different one is taking down (or assisting in that) whole criminal operations like I did these last months. I can’t give that up now; although it doesn’t change the fact that it was the most asshole thing to do –leaving me while I was going after my stepfather-, I do understand why he did it. And maybe if the situation hadn’t been the same, I would have taken that choice as well. Doesn’t excuse him, of course, but I get it. “I was just trying to help while attempting to teach you a lesson as well as getting you back. And it worked out fine”, I finish trying to lighten up the mood a little bit but it doesn’t seem to work at all. Let’s just try to move things in another direction then, and settle this for good. I need to lay down the foundation for our new relationship to build up in solid ground, no misunderstanding in between.
“Look, I’m out right now, and I will be for a while, but I don’t think anyone found out about my cover”, I begin explaining, slowly making way for my proposal. “I can even go as far as to say that I earned some kind of reputation among them, especially after the Castle incident I managed to survive”, at this last statement, Matt, stone-faced as usual, chimes in muttering that Frank just let me walk away because he didn’t see me as a threat to him or society, but I shush him anyway and dismiss his interruption. “The point is: after some sensible time has passed, I think I can go back in; after the dust has settled, I can do it all over again and we can continue taking down mobs and gangs all over the city. Wouldn’t that be great?” I end up asking him with more enthusiasm than he might find appropriate, but I cannot help it. The sensation I got from seeing how my involvement with all those organizations ultimately ended with all of them being torn down by Daredevil and the police is kind of a divine justice that I didn’t even feel when I killed my stepfather (which actually felt somewhat the opposite). It’s like being high on a sense of righteousness no one can take away from you. In those moments I felt like a god on top of a mountain; unstoppable, untouchable and unbreakable. I don’t want to lose those feelings, least of all the one of pure joy at knowing I’m helping innocent people.

It’s only when I see Matt’s features darken that I realize this won’t go as swiftly as I initially thought. Can’t say for sure if it was the over-enthusiastic tone of my voice or the whole idea of going back undercover, but something pissed him off bad. He clenches his jaw hard and visibly tenses in preparation of whatever he’s going to say, most likely some nonsense about it being too dangerous. “You need to stop doing this, Mackenzie”. His tone is deadly low and eerily cold, to the point it gives me chills in a bad way. What’s worst though, is that at first, I think he’s talking about the infiltration plan, until I read him correctly (words, posture, twitches and all) and figure out that he means that I stop doing vigilante work altogether. No. Way. In HELL. The suggestion is so outrageous that it shocks me to the core, leaving me speechless and motionless at the same time. Who the hell does he think he is to tell me something like that? He ain’t even asking, he’s straight out telling me to stop doing it. Hell to the no, Murdock.

“What?! No!” I almost shout in indignation when I finally gather my bearings back. “Why would I? Are you crazy?” Like, is he really, though? What makes him think in his right state of mind (if he’s in it, anyway) that I would just give up something like this? “I’m not stopping anytime soon; this is my life now”, I finish with the same severity he used in the first place when he dared to try and order me to stop helping the innocent. Why the fuck would I want to do something so selfish and cowardly like that? I know that he’s kind of an asshole, I have seen plenty of proof, but does he think I’m the same kind? Or even worse? He would never give up something like that, so why should I? “That’s just the most absurd proposal you have ever made to me, Murdock”. And fuck if I’m not mad as hell right now. I don’t even care about spitting his name like that if he’s going to treat me like a defenseless child after everything I went through the last couple of years. Fuck no.

“That’s no way to live, Mackenzie, believe me”, he almost shouts exasperated from where he’s sitting on the couch. It almost sounds like he’s admonishing a misbehaving child, but I’m not a kid anymore, nor am I behaving badly. I’m a grown-ass young woman who has in mind the best interest of the innocent citizens of New York and wants to do something to keep them safe and sound as much as possible. Where’s the fault in that? Still, he doesn’t see reason yet, and neither does he budge in the subject, rather rambling on about the impending dangers of a life of servitude under the same brand of hand-taken justice that he likes to deliver every night without a fault. “You are just a kid; you have a life full of opportunities in front of you”, he continues in a gentler tone, trying to make me see reason in this already absurd situation. “I’m not changing my mind and I won’t take a step back down; I have made my choice and he’ll have to live with it whether he likes it or not. Otherwise, I can see myself out the door and away from him. “You can’t keep doing this anymore”, he reiterates with a tired sigh, resting his forehead on top of his intertwined fingers, laying both elbows on his knees.
Before I can even put a word in, in my defense, he soldiers on with his spew of self-asserted righteousness, not content with my silent –yet evident– lack of agreement with his argument. “This crazy plan of yours could backfire at any given moment, most likely when you least suspect it to”. He has a point at that, even when he says it with that condescending tone masked as a matter-of-fact one. Yeah, I’m pretty aware it could all go to Hell as quick as a snap of fingers, but it could have done so before in all the time I was doing it and it never happened. I’m not saying it can’t happen, I’m saying it won’t as likely as he wants it to seem. And, anyway, if it turns out that way, I can always count on him saving my ass, right? Or, worst-case scenario, I just make a run for it and skip town altogether. Whichever presents itself first, I guess. “You need to quit while you still can”, he adds in the end, closing his point, for now, to allow me to retort. An that I will, because I’m not going down without at least putting up a good fight. Quit while I still have time? He means while I’m out. He just doesn’t want me to go back in, that’s all. Just take my leave from the world of vigilante work while I’m laying low after the crumbling of several criminal organizations. Well, no chance in Hell I’ll do that. I’m here to stay, Murdock.

“You should know better than anyone why I can’t quit now; or ever, for that matter”, I retort fervently, inching closer on the armchair towards him. I want to make my intentions and resolution crystal clear, so he doesn’t get the wrong idea and starts thinking that I’ll eventually agree. For him, for me, for the city and my parents, I have to keep going on. He just silently furrows his brow and grates his teeth together, surely exasperated by my unmoving stance on the subject at hand. I don’t care how much it pisses him off; I’m no damsel in distress, I can take care of myself. I won’t give up the best thing I have ever achieved in my life just because he’s worried. I have been worried sick ever since I met him, fully aware of his Daredevil-related activities and the danger they pose; and yet I have said jack shit against it. Because it’s not my place, because I trust him, and because I understand not only how important it is for him, but how big of a deal is for the population of the city.

“Exactly!” Matt nearly yells in exasperation, probably tired of my unmoving stance on the matter. “It’s because I know that I’m telling you to stop”, he tries to reason with me still, even after witnessing my strong determination about staying on this path. Honestly, he looks worn out, as if the lone idea of seeing me go through all of that again is aging him years by the second. I get that it upsets him and worries him, but I feel the same way around and I’m keeping my mouth shut about it, just accepting his life as it is: out of my control. Eventually, he puts one of his hands on his forehead, resting the weight of his head on it, utterly exhausted and with almost all of his energy drained by our argument. “You can’t do this anymore”, he continues in a soft, pleading voice, surely feeling defeated after realizing that I won’t move an inch on this. “You’re going to get yourself killed”, he says at last, voice trembling with fear and cracking a bit at the end of the sentence. I hate to see him like this, but he must surely know I feel the same way about him doing his Daredevil thing. He can cry all he wants, but he ain’t going to stop me.

“And so could you!” I scream back, getting up from my seat and almost advancing on Murdock to try and shake some sense into him (or punch it into him, whatever works better, right?). “But that’s not stopping you, right?! My accusation is a valid one, even if it’s brought up by anger and frustration. I should be sitting down next to him, talking in a calm and even tone of voice while patiently explaining this all to him...but I’m sick and tired of taking on the role of the conciliatory person. He has to understand by either the easy or the hard way, I don’t care. “And I’m not trying to stop you either, cause I understand”, I tell him a bit quieter, desperate to make him see my point of view, my side of the story. “Do you know how much I worry about you every time you go after any criminal whatsoever or get yourself into a dangerous situation?” I ask while taking a step towards him, seeing how he squirms a little on the couch, probably feeling guilty at being such a hypocrite. “I’m sorry, Matt. I love you, but you are just being an unfair asshole right now. I get it, I do, but you need to get it too”. I end the sentence in a whisper, plopping back down onto the armchair and
feeling defeated at seeing no end to this discussion.

“It’s not the same and you know it”, he tries to argue lamely, sounding almost petulant. “I have heightened senses; I trained myself for years, furthering what Stick started”, he says bitingly through gritted teeth, knowing well that that’s not enough of a reason. “I have experience, lots of it. You don’t”. And that’s a fucking lie that makes my blood boil. I have experience, or did he forget the MONTHS I spent undercover? What an asshole he can be when he gets stubborn like this. “You aren’t ready yet”, he says quietly, sounding remorseful for who knows what. At that last “observation”, I almost spring from my spot and launch myself over him, intent on straight-up beating some sense into his thick skull. How dare he say something like that? I guess that after seeing how I’m practically trembling with furious energy he decides to take a softer approach to the matter at hand. “Please, just leave that awful life behind and start fresh again”, he begs in the hope that I will turn around and become another bystander on the ongoing war against crime. Fuck that.

“Move in with me”, he offers, to my surprise, with renewed hope in his voice. It’s not that I don’t wanna live with him, it’s just that he’s contradicting himself. He wants me to leave my life of vigilantism behind yet at the same time wants us to live together? It doesn’t make sense. You can’t have one without the other, Murdock. “Stay here and I’ll help you with anything else that you might need”. He’s trying to bargain, that’s for sure. He’s hoping that my love for him will win over my need to help others, and that by offering me to live with him under the condition of stopping my vigilante work, I’ll just renounce everything and play happy housewife while he still fights crime (like I said before that I refuse to do). That’s not happening, not even if he gets down on one knee and pulls out a diamond ring.

I try my best to ignore the offer of moving in since I know it’s more of a change of subject than anything else at this moment. I’m not letting him off the hook so soon and so easily. “I am ready, and I am capable”, I insist vehemently, emphasizing that I’m no rookie when it comes to this stuff. I have experience, I have been training. I know a lot more now than when I first started what seems like a lifetime ago. I have survived so much; I might not be like him, no super senses or whatever, but I ain’t useless either. “I just need to sharpen my skills”, I continue explaining my point to an increasingly frustrated Matt, “you are the perfect person to teach me all I need to know”, I finish calmly as I finally arrive at what I’ve been wanting to say since this whole conversation started. Yes, I have been training a little already with him back before my mother was murdered, and then some more under the “tutelage” (if I had to put it one way) of some of the criminals I worked with or for, back when I was undercover. But I have yet to reach my full potential, though. I know I can learn to do a lot more and that I can sharpen further my skills and techniques; all I need is the right teacher, and the only one who can –and who would possibly agree to it too– do it is Murdock. He has to have thought about the same thing as well; there’s no way he never considered having me as sort of his student, or at least helping me out with training. Still, he remains deadly silent and almost unmoving. I’m not giving up on this, at least not yet.

“If you complete my training, the way Stick could have completed yours, may I add, then I’ll be almost as good as you”, I dare to suggest, even when knowing that Matt never agreed with Stick’s reason to train him in the first place, after he found out about it. Nevertheless, I have to give it a try, is the only way I see that we can reach a consensus. “No, I don’t have frickin superpowers, but I’ll be fine; good enough to be handling things on my own most of the time”. I know my argument isn’t the most convincing one there is, but he has to realize that it’s a reasonable idea in the least. Otherwise, I might be as good as dead, if I go on my own without having Matt as my mentor. Unfortunately, even though he looks like he’s considering the idea, he still seems not convinced by it. Actually, he just appears so goddamn scared, like he fears that if he teaches me more he will be giving me the tools for my destruction instead of showing me how to keep myself alive and kick bad guys’ asses more effectively. Go figure what his internal turmoil is about because I can swear that I
saw the tiniest bit of excitement at the idea of us sparring for hours while I learn all kinds of moves from him. Can’t blame him, the idea is extremely appealing to me as well, vigilantism and all that aside. Honestly, I can even imagine one of those training sessions ending up in se–

“I can’t do it, Mackenzie”, he answers with a sad tone etched into his voice, some kind of indiscernible emotion accompanying that feeling as well. “I can’t just hand you the tools to put yourself in more danger”. And there it is, just what I thought that he was thinking of: the fact that if I get better at fighting I will end up dead instead of being able to avoid getting killed and even severely injured. How can’t he understand that by denying to train me he’ll only put me in more danger than if he does so? It’s not that complicated; he’s withholding all the knowledge necessary for me to be able to expertly defend myself, not the other way around as he thinks. Is it really that hard to understand? Or does he believe that by objecting to help me I will see no other option than to retire once and for all? Because that’s not happening. I can live with him refusing to teach me, but I won’t stand his prohibition of being a vigilante. I’m trying to compromise here, seeing as he doesn’t want me to continue this line of work while I reject the idea of giving it all up, I want to propose something that could leave us both satisfied. Matt would be more relieved knowing that I can defend myself to the best of my capability, and I would not only be able to carry on with my work while still being with Murdock, but I would also be able to perform even better. It’s a win-win situation, in my opinion.

“And that’s not even a complete solution anyway”, he follows through in a resigned yet nervous tone of voice, getting quieter by the minute. “If someone finds out about you, about what you have done…”, he says with a slightly trembling bottom lip, “no amount of skills could ever be enough if you’re too deep undercover”. It’s always unsettling to see Murdock scared. The man who has faced it all; the “demon” who has spat on Death’s face; the “Man Without Fear”. Just to see him like this, so unnerved and worried gives me chills. And I’m not even denying his point; he’s one hundred percent right about that. If I get caught while deep down undercover, I don’t think he could even save me. But my argument remains the same: it could happen to him as well. Matt isn’t a stranger to involve himself with either dangerous people or situations while donning his formal suit and tie, yet he keeps doing it despite knowing that he could be found out and exposed. If my cover gets blown up, I will probably be tortured and killed, but it would be just me; no one else would have to suffer the same fate. My direct family is all dead and I doubt that they could connect Matt, Karen, and Foggy back to me. If Matt’s identity as Daredevil gets revealed, though, that’s a completely different story. I’m a no one in this city; he’s Frank Castle former lawyer AND part of the legal team that took down Fisk. He’s quite famous around here.

And I have to live with that, every day; with the constant fear and knowledge that at any given moment he could die, he could be killed. Either at night while being out patrolling and generally Daredeviling, or during the day, as Matt Murdock, just because someone fucking found out his secret identity. It’s not fair. I can’t do that, it would drive me insane. Sitting down here while he exposes himself to such danger. At least if I’m out there as well I can serve as backup or just be nearby and ready to assist. I won’t just stay locked up waiting for him to come back, pulling out my hair while worrying over and over if he’ll ever make it back at all. That’s not healthy; that’s not okay. I won’t stand for that, just as I won’t stand for letting myself be sidelined out of love. He needs to understand. “Well, you can either help me or I’ll just walk away and figure it out on my own”, I tell him in a voice way firmer than I thought even possible. “You don’t want to train me, fine!” I continue while raising my voice, already feeling my calmness slip away from my grasp. “But that’s not going to stop me”, I assure him in a threatening tone, letting him know that I’m deadly serious and that I mean business on this. “So, do you want to make sure I properly know how to defend myself, or would you rather let me go off on my own and get killed because I wasn’t good enough?!?” I’m not tiptoeing around it anymore, he has to face the truth of the potential consequences. I don’t care if this ends up in a heated argument, with both of us yelling, as long as we can reach an
agreement once we are done talking. Even if I walk away for good I don’t really want to leave this in such bad shape. I have the hope that if he doesn’t reconsider now, he will come to his senses later and I’ll have the chance to come back. I don’t deserve to be left holding any grudges.

At my words, Matt’s brows furrow in an expression half hurt and half angry. I understand his frustration and concern, I would be upset too if he told me that he would leave me for disagreeing with me, doesn’t mean I wouldn’t get his point of view. If our roles were reversed and I wouldn’t budge in my stance, I would let him go, knowing that it’s not what I want but that I can’t force him to stay against his will. “You’ll leave, just like that?” He asks incredulously, looking at me through his red-tinted lenses with a face full of betrayal and heartbreak. “After everything we went through?” He pointedly says, making me feel a little guilty already, even when I have no reason whatsoever. I mean most of the awful shit that we surfed through happened because of him, but I still get what he’s saying. “So many battles we have gone through, against others, against each other and even against ourselves...and you will just run away from all of that?!” He rants on, clinging to the hope that I might still change my mind and choose him above everyone else; which, as I already said, it’s not going to happen, no matter how much I love him. And hey, I’m not running away from anything, far from that, but he’s forcing my hand on this matter, so I have not much of a choice here. He gave me an ultimatum, told me to leave my life as a vigilante behind to be with him, and I can’t do that. So what else am I supposed to do? Leave. “Just because I refuse to help you achieve a life of pain?” He finally ends, broken and miserable by the mere thought of it. Like I already said a million times before: I understand, but he has to do the same. It only works both ways, or it’s over.

Well, it’s time to repay in kind I guess. Whatever it takes to try and make him see what I see (no pun intended, this is serious shit). “What would you do if I told you it’s me or Daredevil?” I ask him in a clipped tone of voice, dead serious and staring him square in his unseeing eyes. “Huh, what would you choose?” I inquire more emphatically, seeing the way he slightly flinches at the question. “It’s the same for me, Matt”, I try to explain to him a bit exasperated and bordering on giving up completely, “but I’m trying to take the middle ground here, to compromise and pick both”. His jaw clenches with force, signaling that he’s most likely trying to keep from snapping at me and my “foolish ideas”. “You just have to let me”, I tell him imploringly, aware that it’s now or never, and that if he doesn’t cave in after this, he never will. Everything is on the line here, I need to try harder. I scoot closer to where he is, still sitting in my armchair, and reach out for one of his hands. Once I grasp his trembling fingers and hold his right hand between both of mine, caressing it lovingly. This could be the last time that we are like this, or that we even see each other. “We can make this work”, I assure him on the verge of tears, squeezing his hand while trying to stop my voice from breaking. “I know we can.”

“Mackenzie, I…” Matt starts in the softest voice I ever heard him use since he rescued me from those assholes that tortured me. He doesn’t follow up with anything though, and I can see from his conflicted expression that he’s battling himself inside his mind. His brain and his heart are probably going off against the other, trying to impose their own will above others’. On one side, he surely remains firm on not wanting me to keep fighting criminals, but at the same time, he must love so much that he’s willing to let me do what I want as long as I stay with him. I understand how disgruntled he can feel about this because I feel the same way sometimes; the difference is that I already learned to accept that side of him and his choice to live his life that way. If he wants me to stick by, he has to do the same.

Okay, he’s clearly vulnerable right now; he’s doubting himself and his conviction, so all I have to do is barrel through until I finally break his last wall. “It doesn’t have to be full vigilantism like you do, it can just be what I did for Nelson & Murdock, at least at first”, I explain, hopeful and even a little excited, aiming to reassure him with my agreement on not doing crazy shit from the get-go, but rather easing into the swirl of things. He seems to ponder the idea, which already is more than I was
expecting to get from him. “And then I can move on to bigger things”, I venture hesitantly, afraid that he will back away and close off if I move too fast with my plan of reintegrating myself into the nightlife of crime-fighting in the city. Only thing left now is to deliver the final blow. Either he agrees or I walk. “But you can’t just ask me to go from breaking apart entire mob operations from the inside—or aiding in doing so— to just sit around and watch you go out and save the world”. Well, that last part is a bit of an exaggeration; saving New York would be a more accurate description of what he does on the regular, not counting that time he actually saved the world after defeating the Hand. Crazy bastards wanted to take over the world or something like that. A bunch of punk-ass bitches if you ask me. Anyway, going back to the matter at hand. “It is my duty now too”, I tell him calmly, drawing circles with one of my thumbs on top of his hand. “I want to help; I need to”. I try to convey as much feeling as I can into my words, hoping to be able to move him from his refusing stance. I really need him to listen to me this time; our entire relationship depends on it.

He slowly squeezes back my hand, lifting his head after having been staring at our hands for some time. “I understand how you feel, but…” He starts again, his disapproval already kicking in once more. I can’t let him go back to that place of denial; if I do so, I will lose him for good this time around. I’m so close to finally making him give up on his stupid ideal of keeping me safe, even when I have never been truly safe in my life, out of my own volition to help others despite whatever suffering may come my way. And if he lets me go, I won’t be safer either, but rather in greater danger, most likely. Completely alone and with a bunch of skills yet to perfect, I’ll be an easy target out there on my own. With him by my side, I know I’ll accomplish a lot more and be way safer than without him to look out for me.

“Exactly, you do!” I say encouragingly, not wanting to seem exasperated or demeaning. If it can make him see things my way, then there’s still hope for us to stay together, after all. “So you can’t do this to me, Matt”, I continue, although not in a reproachful demeanor. I might sound a little whiny, not gonna lie here, but all is fair in love and war, right? So I may as well use every weapon in my arsenal, no matter how low I can steep on this matter. If doing puppy eyes (or puppy voice, since he wouldn’t be able to see my wet-dog expression) is what it takes to have him on my side, then so be it; I won’t hold back any longer. “I love you, but I also love helping people”, I remind him once more in the most honest tone I can muster, pulling at his emotional strings. Cheap shot, yeah; but whatever, he’s more in the wrong than I am. “Please, don’t alienate me like this. By your side, I won’t just be able to accomplish more, but I'll also be safer”, I reassure him in a pleading and loving tone of voice, all in an attempt to break him for once and for all. It looks to be partially working, at least. “And when I get badly injured, you can be there to patch me up, like before, and I’ll be there for you in the same way”. I know bringing up my previous close encounters with death is not the smartest move, but I have been on the same spot as him before as well. And I will willingly do it all again, as long as I can rest assured that he’s okay. It hurts, like hell, I know, but unless we both stop doing what we’re doing…there’s no other way around it.

Matt withdraws his hand from mine, takes off his glasses (leaving them on top of the coffee table) and covers his face with both of his hands while he leans his head back against the backrest of the couch. I can’t tell for sure what he’s feeling right now I can only assume that he’s trying to fight the strong desire to give in and accept the terms and conditions of my stay. The idea of me moving in with him permanently (or at least not in a reproachful demeanor. I might sound a little whiny, not gonna lie here, but all is fair in love and war, right? So I may as well use every weapon in my arsenal, no matter how low I can steep on this matter. If doing puppy eyes (or puppy voice, since he wouldn’t be able to see my wet-dog expression) is what it takes to have him on my side, then so be it; I won’t hold back any longer. “I love you, but I also love helping people”, I remind him once more in the most honest tone I can muster, pulling at his emotional strings. Cheap shot, yeah; but whatever, he’s more in the wrong than I am. “Please, don’t alienate me like this. By your side, I won’t just be able to accomplish more, but I'll also be safer”, I reassure him in a pleading and loving tone of voice, all in an attempt to break him for once and for all. It looks to be partially working, at least. “And when I get badly injured, you can be there to patch me up, like before, and I’ll be there for you in the same way”. I know bringing up my previous close encounters with death is not the smartest move, but I have been on the same spot as him before as well. And I will willingly do it all again, as long as I can rest assured that he’s okay. It hurts, like hell, I know, but unless we both stop doing what we’re doing…there’s no other way around it.

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and plead for me to stay away from the criminal underworld. I don’t want to hurt him, and I hate seeing him like this, but how the hell does he think that I feel about the same thing but regarding him? I feel devastated as well, if not more. We both lost everyone, and we have mostly one another, so I don’t think it good to sever all ties because of such a stupid disagreement. We can make it work, I insist on that. Either we do, or we lose not only each other but a part of ourselves as well…forever. 

I unconsciously let my head hang down a little bit while racking through my mind for the right words. I really need him to give up on this, to let me fight by his side. We can have the best of both worlds or nothing at all. As I breathe out a deep sigh, I lift my head once more and look straight at him, knowing full well that we have finally reached the endgame. “I know, believe me, I do”, I tell him quietly, suddenly finding the suffocating silence surrounding us to be too much for me. It’s almost claustrophobic in here. “And I understand completely, but if you plant your foot down I’ll just walk away and you’ll lose me all the same”. It feels like I’m explaining this to a child, and it surely looks the part from the way he’s kind of pouting petulantly like one. I’m hating this whole conversation, but I prefer it over a cold shoulder and a non-existent goodbye; I would even choose angry shouting instead. At least, if things don’t go as planned, we could maybe have an amicable departure. I can’t leave on absolute good terms, since he’s a stubborn asshole who would either have me locked up in his apartment like a caged bird or as far away from him as possible, rather than sharing his lifestyle and vocation. I want what he doesn’t want, and I don’t understand why he doesn’t want it as well. We could have it all, even if it means possible death. I would always pick that instead of nothing. I would rather be present when the worst-case scenario presents itself than being who knows how long away. I would rather have the opportunity to save Matt and fail than find out a few days later about his death while being across the country or some shit like that. And as much as it pains me to be the reason for his suffering, I would rather be in those situations myself with him by my side. I know that I will probably go in a rather unpleasant way because of my preferred line of work, but if it has to be like that, I want Murdock next to me when it happens. It’s extremely selfish, I know; he would blame and hate himself forever after that, but I would choose that over dying alone, anytime.

Once my internal monologue is done, I look at Matt again, noticing how dreadful and pained he looks, clearly loathing the idea of me leaving him. He must be in the same state of mind as I am, wondering why can’t I understand that his point of view is the correct one. I don’t blame him, he lost his father because of the same criminal world that he has been fighting to this day, he surely doesn’t want any other of his loved ones to fall victim of the same. He’s just being protective, but he needs to accept that he can’t possibly protect everyone and that it’s ultimately other people’s choice to put themselves in the line of danger while trying to help. He’s being a hypocrite because I can demand his safety as much as he demands mine. “At least you would be alive”, he croaks in a barely audible voice, sounding hoarse and hurt. He was silent for so long that his sudden words abruptly took me from my thoughtful reverie, so much so that it almost startled me. He does follow his comment with anything else, though, clearly having no arguments left to use in this discussion. I guess he already said everything he had to said, and now he’s mostly grabbing at straws, searching for any kind of reason to sustain his logic in all of this. It’s not very effective, and now I know for sure that I have more points to keep up my fight and –hopefully– win it.

“No, I wouldn’t and you know it”, I reply firmly, stating the ugly truth even if he wants to ignore it and delude himself with the fantasy that I will go on my own and live a life of peace and prosperity and whatever the fuck his mind likes to come up with. That’s not going to happen; wherever I go, I’ll bring justice with me (yeah, I’m aware it sounds a little too dramatic and with some sense of grandeur that I don’t really have, but whatever; let me live my fantasy). “With the lack of training you can provide, I’ll probably get myself killed sooner than later, and then you gonna regret it even more”. It’s the harsh reality, but he needs to be confronted with it. Pushing me away will only get me on my grave faster, not slower. He wants me to live as long as possible, then he better stick by my
side and watch my back, just as I’m willing to do for him. “Yes, I came close to dying many times in all these months we have known each other, but it’s also because of you that I’m still here”, I say with as much conviction as I can, squeezing his right knee while leaning in closer again. Let’s not forget that he was the one who saved me from that bully and his father what now seems like ages ago. He protected me almost from the first moments and has done so ever since, even when I was putting myself in danger by following him and doing stupid shit. “You saved me every time I came close to death”. He did, he does, and I’m sure as hell that if he accepts my choice to keep doing this, he will continue to save me as well. Because he’s capable and he loves me. Because despite what anyone says, he’s a hero.

Murdock puts his right hand on top of mine and dislodges it from his knee but keeps it grasped in his, not wanting to let go yet. He looks lost, eyes darting rapidly all over my face as if searching for something, anything he can use to convince to give up. “Yes, but it’s also because of me that you got yourself in those situations in the first place”, he retorts bitterly, too ashamed by the truth (I mean, kinda half-truth tho, since much of it had nothing to do with him really, directly at least). But when you boil it down, he actually becomes almost the root of all my life problems and tragedies. Then again, isn’t that what love entails? I know for sure that it’s not all sunshine and rainbows, there’s darkness and sorrow mixed in too; that’s the beauty of it: how much pleasure and pain it can evoke, although it only works out well when there’s a balance between those two, like with everything else. “If we never have met, you might have been better off”, acquiesces Matt in a low whisper, obviously not happy with the prospect of never having met me yet still at peace with the fact that I wouldn’t have gotten into all this trouble if that were the case. Fuck that, though. How dare he? Do I not mean anything to him at all? Wishing we have never met…fucking asshole. Dear Lord, give me the strength to deal with this moron and his insufferable self-righteousness. Now I truly understand why Karen and Foggy have such a hard time while trying to put up with some of his bullshit. Like seriously, Murdock, you aren’t the center of the fucking universe. Not everyone and everything moves around you, dumbass. How much self-esteem and self-loathing can someone have to pull that kind of stupid reasoning off? Outstanding. Not meeting doesn’t change shit, even though I would have turned up dead long ago. I became some sort of vigilante on my own not only because of him but because of my father and his moral code. Yeah, Daredevil shaped a lot of me, but he isn’t exactly my origin story.

I pry my hand off of Matt’s, bringing it up together with my other one to rub my face a little. Goddamnit, I’m exhausted. How long have we been going at this? It must be at least getting dark, right? Will we be able to reach some kind of consensus before night falls over us? Will I be allowed to sleep here, or will I have to crawl back into the hole I have been hiding in for the past days? I would love to lay down in Matt’s bed again; those silk bed sheets are to die for, man. Okay, I’ve had enough, let’s wrap this up, shall we? “Look, I’m not a spiritual or religious person; I don’t believe in destiny”, I begin sort of vaguely, noting Murdock’s expression change from sad to confused in seconds. He’s clearly curious about where I’m going with all of this. “Still, I’m confident there are certain things that are meant to happen no matter what”, I follow patiently, building up to my main counterargument. Matt just keeps looking at me as if I grew a second head. “So, even if you could travel back in time and stop us from meeting, I don’t think it would change much at the core”. And now he seems to be getting what I’m trying to say, if his serious face is anything to go by. He’s not happy with my argument, I can tell, but the point isn’t that; what I have been trying to do all this freaking time is make him fucking understand. “Somehow, sooner or later, I would’ve still become a vigilante of my own; my mom would have died the same way, at the hands of that piece of shit; and I would have ended up killing him for it”. And it’s true because the real reason for all of that is my father’s dead; that’s what started the chain reaction that led me to where I’m today. If he hadn’t died, things would be entirely different today; at least I would still have my whole family. “And then I would have ended up completely alone. On this timeline, at least I still have you”, I tell him sincerely, acknowledging the fact that if my father was alive to this day, I probably would have never
met Matt for real. That last statement seems to strike a chord within him since he looks like he’s about to tear up. “If you really wanted for me to not take this path, you would have to: number one, never become Daredevil and, number two, stop my father from getting killed”. Nothing else he could do to avoid all of this, simple as that.

Matt’s lower lip starts to tremble a little bit and he ends up holding it between his teeth, trying to keep it still. Whatever he might have left to use to argue further is clearly in shambles, since he takes so long to even get his shit together. He’s grasping at straws once again; it’s very upsetting. What’s left to be said, Murdock? What else can you come up with that you believe might change my mind? Haven’t I made myself clear already? I stated over and over again that this is final, I’m not going back on my word nor am I choosing differently. I made up my mind long ago, and no matter what happens I’m not staying away from this path I have been on ever since. This is my life now, as been for a few years. Nothing can turn me around, not even Matt’s pleading. He has to come to terms with this and either take it in stride and part ways with me or suck it up, bear with it and play along. That last one is the only way he can keep me. He doesn’t have to like it, or agree with it; he just has to accept it and don’t interfere. He can help all he wants, and in some situations, he might have the ultimate say, but apart from that, he lets me do my thing. “If I could, I would do number one, but—” He doesn’t finish his sentence, his voice dying out before it completely cuts off. He either doesn’t know how to end it, or he does but doesn’t dare to do it. Whichever it is, it’s a clear sign that he has given up on trying to make me abide by his wishes. Guess it’s time to put the last nail in the coffin.

“I know; I understand. Do you?” I ask him while leaning even closer still, already feeling the taxation of the ordeal seep deeply into my bones. I’m exhausted, and I’m sure I could sleep for a week straight right after this whole thing ends. It’s been a rollercoaster ride nonstop ever since I met Matt, basically. More so this last year, with all the comings and goings, and ensuing drama. I can barely keep up with everything, at this point. And despite my fervent speech about wanting to help the weak and innocent, I wouldn’t mind taking a few “days off” and just stay here with Murdock, chilling and charging up before going out every night again. I know that it won’t begin like that, anyway, but I’m not sitting around longer than needed either. Once I’m ready to return to the streets, I plan on doing as much as possible, even if it’s just recon work by day for Matt and Foggy; I just don’t want to feel useless. Yet, he still seems uncertain about giving in. How frustrating; all he has to do is say yes, and then this entire conversation will be done. We can go back to the lovely domesticity we lived in for a short amount of time back in the days before my mom was killed. I need some semblance of normality and joy; I’m done feeling this constant dread and emptiness. Can’t he see that? That I want us to be together and work as a team? I’m aware that he means well and that he’s just trying to keep me away from all the violence to keep me safe, but he’s not God; he can’t be everywhere, and he isn’t all-powerful either. Sometime, somewhere, something awful is going to happen and he won’t be able to prevent it, he has to make peace with that undeniable truth. He can either enjoy my company and love while we both take care of each other, or he can regret for the rest of his life being so goddamn stubborn about something that will never be entirely under his control. His choice as well as mine.

“Yeah…I do”, he concedes, at last, making me breathe a sigh of relief. I didn’t know I was holding so much tension inside; I feel like a big weight has been lifted from my shoulders. Still, that answer isn’t convincing enough. I’m going to need something more solid than that, Murdock. A straight, definitive response that not only assures me that you understand but hopefully one that conveys that you agree with this as well. I’m sure that there’s no real winning situation in all of this; if he says yes, then he’ll worry constantly over me (but then again, he already does so about Karen and Foggy, and as much as he tries to push them away, they keep coming back), and if he says no, he’ll regret letting me leave. If he concentrates only on the bad aspects of us staying together and me helping him fight criminals, then there’s nothing I can really do or say to change how he feels about it. He’ll be anxious and preoccupied all the time, even going as far as putting himself in avoidable risks because
he can’t focus on his target. I don’t want to be a distraction for him, not when he’s working at least, so I really need him to trust me. To trust my capabilities as much as my cunning. I might have made some rash decisions in the past, but I’ve grown a lot since then. I’m not the same reckless teenager I was when I first met him; I’m more of a smart and responsible woman now. I’ll take care of myself as much as possible, but I’ll also take care of him as well. And if it comes down to only one of us making it out alive, then I’m sure we’ll end up fighting against each other when trying to save the other from death. Surely, he would give his life for me just as I would do the same for him; there’s no doubt in that. It’s just how it is; how it has been for a while, and what it will be in the future as long as we stay together.

Feeling already a little bad about this whole mess, but knowing that I have to pull through at least until he finally caves in, I get up from my seat on the armchair and take the step that separates me from Murdock, gently touching my right knee to his left one in order to get his full attention. Matt’s head lifts in confused wonder, and he looks at me with knitted eyebrows. As soon as I have enough space to move forward, I sit on his lap, straddling him while placing my hands at the nape of his neck. He seems taken back by the action, which I guess is understandable given the tension that had built between us over the last few hours. Still, he doesn’t complain or say anything, just letting me do as I please. That’s a good sign, I guess. Carefully weighing my current options, I begin to slowly caress the short hair on the back of his head, trying to soothe his sulking mood. Maybe we can finally have sex again after all this is dealt with. I certainly wouldn’t mind. But first things first, let’s finish this argument off. “I love you”, I tell him honestly, from the heart, in almost a whisper, noticing how his tense features start to soften a little. “But I also love helping innocent people”, I remind him before he gets the idea that I have given in, “and I know for a fact that you feel the same way”. He goes rigid at that last statement as if the truth surprised him at all. He knows that that’s how it is, he won’t ever deny it, but he has to come to terms with the fact that we share that aspect; that it’s not exclusive to him alone. Matt takes a deep breath and relaxes again, letting his hands finally move towards the place I’m sure they were eagerly itching to reach. His hands land on my hips and he squeezes just enough to remind me who’s stronger physically, but he’s still completely aware who has the strongest pull out of the two of us. The fact that he’s bending to my will is sufficient proof. Yet I don’t mind at all, relishing the feeling of pressure and raw power. I even partake in a bit of mischievousness and create just a tiny bit of friction, a promise of what can happen if we reach an agreement. If the silent moan he can’t suppress is anything to go by…I believe I have him in my pocket.

“Take it or leave it, this is who I am”, I proclaim with finality, wanting to push him over the edge and have him agree with me for once. Damn, this has proven to be one bitch of a conversation. I was fairly sure that it would take me long to convince him, but it’s already dark outside. I just really want to go to bed, man, so just fucking say yes already and let’s be done with this. “Don’t try to change me”, I advise him a little petulantly, knowing damn well that it’s just a waste of time —after all, I’m as hard-headed and determined as he is—. “You’ll only lose me in the process”. My warning seems to make the trick since his whole demeanor suddenly changes from meek to something else that I’m not quite sure what it is yet. Guess I will find out sooner than later. After all, the way he’s practically bruising the skin under his fingers is a telltale of what he’s thinking about. Don’t worry, Murdock, I want it as much as you do, if not even more. Matt’s pink tongue darts out of his mouth to wet his dry lips and he swallows thickly after a second. God, isn’t that hot as hell? To be expected from the Devil himself, I suppose.

“I see”, comes his quiet response, which sounds way louder in the silent apartment. My focus and anxiousness became so prominent that I blocked every other noise coming from outside. This is it, the final answer. He will either give up and take me in or stand his ground and tell me to fuck off. I really hope that it’s the first option; I’m not overly excited about the prospect of having to find somewhere else to sleep tonight. Also, I really fucking love him and want to stay with him, as long
as he’ll have me. “If those are my only two options”, he continues in the same gravelly voice, interrupting my frenetic train of thought. Oh God, I can’t deal with so much suspense. Come on, Murdock, I’m dying on the inside! “Then I’ll take it”, he mutters quietly, with a growing smirk painting itself on his gorgeous face. Once my brain registers his words and their actual meaning, I let out something between a laugh and a squeal, and practically collapse on top of him, completely exhausted and happy. My head ends up resting on his right shoulder and he starts to caress my back with both hands, humming contently. That’s it, we’re good. Thank Satan for that! Almost literally. Not being able to hold back any longer, I embrace him with both of my arms, locking my hands behind his head, and nuzzle my face on the crook of his neck. Finally, some peace and quiet, and – most importantly – a whole lotta happiness to enjoy together. It won’t be always this easy, I know that (I’m not delusional, after all), but after this, I’m left with the feeling that no mountain is unclimbable for us. Whatever obstacle we may find in our path, we’ll deal with it accordingly and continue to move forward. Anything is possible if we stick together, and everything looks a bit less daunting as well.

Another half an hour must have gone by like this, with both of us just basking in the feeling of relief and joy. For a moment I think I might have even fallen asleep, but I’m not sure. Matt hasn’t really moved at all, and he’s still stroking my back soothingly. It feels so nice being like this, at peace and comfortable. I could stay on this couch, laying on top of him, forever. But as much as I would enjoy it, my body is craving the bed with silk sheets placed in the other room. And as if that wasn’t enough, I’m starting to become more aware of all the physical contact between mine and Murdock’s bodies. As tired as I am, it’s been a really long time since we had sex or did anything remotely close to it. Can’t say that I don’t want a piece of that ass right now, despite my need for sleep. But it’s not until he sighs deeply, absolutely content with how things turned out, and kisses the top of my head, that my body begins to stir from its relaxed state. All of a sudden, Matt’s hands on my back become too much and not enough, and I begin to seriously consider biting his neck to get the appropriate reaction that I’m looking for. As much as I would like to make love all night long, I’m more into a quick and hard fuck right now, and afterward going go sleep. Maybe tomorrow morning we can take our time and be more romantic about it, but tonight I just want to take it out of my system; to release all thatpent-up frustration and sexual tension to finally feel completely relaxed and free. Just one last rush of adrenaline that after it runs its course, and combined with that feeling of safety that Murdock’s presence always makes me feel, will leave me knocked out on the bed, assuring me that I will drift into soundless sleep for the rest of the evening until the sun comes up.

Having decided what my next move is going to be, I straighten up slowly on Matt’s lap, trying not to be too fast as to not startle him and ruin the mood right away. Once I got his full attention, with his brows furrowed in confusion and his mouth opening to question my actions, I take the opportunity to grab his face with both of my hands and move forward to kiss him deeply. There’s nothing soft or tentative about it, wanting to jump straight to the action and forego any kind of foreplay. Thankfully, my now-again-boyfriend seems to catch my vibe quickly and follows my lead with as much intensity. Seconds pass between the first touch of our lips and his hands latching onto my hips without hesitation whatsoever, and once more I feel finally at home. After all the shit I went through, at least I still got this going for me, which is nice. Amid the clashing of teeth and battle of tongues, I manage to mumble a brief instruction, telling Murdock to take me to his bedroom. We’ll leave the couch sex for another day, as of now I really need a mattress under my back. He doesn’t waste any time in complying and soon enough he’s lifting me along his body, taking a hold of the back of my legs to keep me from falling flat on my ass. I cross my legs behind his back for added support and let myself be led towards the bedroom while enjoying the ongoing kissing. Arguably one of the best things about having a blind boyfriend who can sense everything around him with his other four senses combined is that in moments like this, he doesn’t need to “see” where he is going, so there’s no need for us to stop making out in order to not crash into a wall or stumble over furniture.
It takes barely five seconds for Matt to reach his bed and almost throw me on top of it. Doesn’t take a genius to know that he wants this as much as me, if not even more. I mean, in all this time we have been separated, I have been fucking around (or at least trying to, whenever he felt the need to show up and ruin my night) while he couldn’t even get laid with Karen. So, I would think that it’s fair to say that maybe he really wants it more than me after all. Not that I’m complaining or anything (you very well know that), it’s actually for the better. Cause when Murdock wants it badly, things tend to get a little crazy. Like that one time with the belt; that was a wild, yet fun, ride for sure (even tho I had just found out that my mom was killed, that was fucking horrible). Wonder what he’ll come up with tonight, or maybe he’ll be so far gone –like myself– that he’ll just rip my clothes off and fuck me into oblivion. That sounds pretty good to me. As soon as his body jumps onto the mattress, his mouth is on mine again, kissing nonstop and savoring every second of it. Then it all becomes just a tangle of limbs, fumbling to get the other’s body free from the restraining pieces of clothing. Only when we discard the last garments do I realize that we are both naked and that Matt is impossibly hard. This is definitely going to be a good one. Fast, rough and just absolutely fucking intense. I’m betting my money that we don’t last even five minutes, taking into account our states of pure frenzy and all-consuming lust. And we won’t make it to a second round either, surely collapsing after we are done and going straight to sleep. Still worth it, though.

A few more minutes go by between prepping, putting the condom on and more kissing, but when we are both finally ready, Matt doesn’t waste any more time and thrusts all the way inside in one swift motion. The surprise at his sudden move, coupled with the feeling of fullness after so damn long (those wannabe-gangster fuckboys didn’t come close to Murdock’s girth in any way, shape or form, mind you), is enough to make me squeal in delight. The pain is shadowed by the pleasure and straight-up joy to even fully register on my clouded mind, and it’s all uphill from here. Just like I predicted: fast, rough and all-around incredible. Man, I’m so happy about how things turned out in the end. Although, right now is a little difficult to concentrate on anything else besides Matt and the way he keeps hitting that sweet spot of mine with every sharp thrust of his hips. He’s driving me insane; I don’t think I can’t take much more of this delicious torture. It’s just wave after wave of raw pleasure, and I can see and feel that he’s on the same ride. It won’t take long before we’re both coming in earth-shattering orgasms. Ah, it’ll be abso-fucking-lutely wonderful. As if on cue, Matt picks up his pace –if at this point that’s even possible, considering how fast he’s pounding me already– and I’m on the verge of crying from the mind-numbing collapse of my whole nervous system, being overflowed with sensations from all over my body. It’s like an electric storm is happening inside me.

The room that was filled by panting, moaning and nearly screaming of mostly names and obscenities, gets deadly quiet all of a sudden as Murdock and I reach our peak together. Few thrusts later he’s pulling out and falling right next to me, completely exhausted and happy at the same time. While we try to catch our breaths, I slither one of my hands across the sheets and take his in mine, silently holding it while attempting to even my breathing pattern into a normal one once again. He lets his hand be grabbed without resistance and even squeezes in acknowledgment as he settles a bit more comfortably and uses one of his meditation techniques to calm down faster. Of course, he’s the one to achieve it first, which leaves me thinking about getting myself into meditation, if only to be able to pull the same trick after sex. With both of us lying on our back while looking up to the ceiling and holding hands, we finally reach our previous state of shared serenity and cool off a little, already feeling the gross sensation of bodily fluids drying on our skins. Any other time I would probably get up and go take a shower to get rid of the stickiness, but I’m so fucking tired that I just wanna cuddle with Matt and go straight to sleep, no more hassles involved. I end up telling Murdock just that, knowing him well enough as to expect the offer to take a shower together and get cleaned up. He just tells me that he agrees and that we’ll do it in the morning, with a tone of voice that leaves open the possibility of shower sex. I probably won’t mind it, but we’re still hours away and I’m beginning to get drowsy.
Although my body is begging for shutdown, my mind can’t let go of wakefulness before putting to rest one last question regarding the future. So, with as much clarity as I have left, I mumble an inquiry about what happens next. Matt is silent for a little while, probably trying to figure out what I’m referring to and then pondering his answer. Ultimately, he tells me that we’ll start slow on our way to finally becoming partners in the crazy world of vigilantism. He’s adamant about making it clear that I’ll have to train extensively before he deems it safe for me to take on more dangerous missions, and that he won’t allow me to go on patrol at night before he’s satisfied with my skills in combat and strategic thinking. He doesn’t bark about it though; he explains calmly, with a hushed tone, making it obvious that he’s just concerned about my wellbeing and wants me to be safe. He goes on detail regarding the whole process, telling when, where and how he will train me, which sounds a lot like a less insane intense version of what Stick did when he was a kid. Luckily, he already knows that I love him, so he won’t leave me when I give him a handmade bracelet or something (yeah, okay, kinda insensitive joke, whatever). He also assures me that I can go pick up my “work” during the day for Nelson & Murdock as soon as I want, seeing it as mostly harmless and safer. The last thing he says on the matter is that even after he gives me the okay to go out at night with him, I have to swear to him to follow his explicit orders, especially when those regard threats to my life. So, basically, he means that if he tells me to leave when things go awry, then I have to obey him, even if it means saving my own ass at the expense of his. It is only then when I chime in and interrupt him, assuring him that there’s no way in Hell, Heaven or Earth that I will leave him to die just to save myself.

“Believe it or not, Matt, I want you to live as much as you want me. Even if it means sure death, I’m not leaving you behind. I won’t make it anyway if something happens to you”, I tell him honestly, with more conviction than I ever had in my entire existence. “My life is tied to yours, as much as yours is tied to mine. So just suck it up and let’s go to sleep”. I feel his body stiffen next to mine, probably about to retort, but I just turn my back to him while reaching behind me in search for one of his arms, pulling it towards me as soon as I latch onto it: a clear invitation to shut up and spoon me. Either feeling defeated or just understanding everything, he lets himself be guided and ends up pulling me flush against his chest, whispering “goodnight” and “sweet dreams” into my ear before kissing the nape of my neck. And thus, we have finally the peace and quiet I have been longing for. Also, the closeness and love, but we already had that, we were just missing the last piece. I know that it’s going to be hard, and that we’ll probably fight a lot in terms of what we want and what we don’t want –both wanting to fight crime while at the same time not wanting the other to get hurt, or worse--, but that’s something that we’ll have to learn to deal with along the way. Nobody is born knowing how to work perfectly a relationship like this, yet we have already made amazing progress. This could have all ended if we didn’t reach an agreement an hour or so ago, and it can still blow up in our faces in the worst way possible, but at least we are willing to try to sort this out together.

Because we love each other. And I tell Matt so, as I feel the weight of sleep pulling me under, and he says it right back before we both give in to our tiredness. It’ll be hard, but we’ll be okay as long as we do our damn best to work things out. I have no idea what the future holds for us, and –based on both of our pasts-- I don’t have high hopes that it’ll be all sunshine and rainbows, but the worst thing that can happen is that one or both of us die. Anything below that level of tragedy surely can be something that we can deal with together. All I need is him, I know that. And even if I’m not all he needs, for me it’s more than enough knowing that he needs me in any kind of way possible. And thus, we reach the end, for now at least; I don’t know what the future hold for you either, my dear friend, but I hope is nothing short of great. Maybe we’ll meet again in the future, and luckily both of us will be doing well. I also hope that I have managed to mean something to you as you do to me. I’ll miss you, that’s for sure, but I do believe that this isn’t the last we’ll see of each other. Take care, thanks for everything, and till next time.
So, this is it, the END. Finally, after three long years, it's done. Thankfully it all turned out well for the couple, despite all the bumps in the road that they had to endure (especially Mackenzie). It was a fun ride for sure and I had a great time writing and creating this story. I really hope you all enjoyed reading it as well.

To everyone that has read, is reading, or will read this story, thank you for your time and interest. I hope that at least I managed to entertain you with it. I appreciate the patience, all the kudos, and messages. Thank you again for accompanying me on this long journey, and as always, and feel free to leave a comment saying whatever you want.

Till next time, maybe... I'm planning to continue this story on a series of short stories probably titled "Matt and Mackenzie's Most Memorable Moments", but can't say for sure when I'll be writing, least of all uploading. So, if you really like this fanfic and want to read more about these two's lives together, stay tuned. Bye, for now.

End Notes

This is a wild idea I got while watching the series and decided to write it down when I finished episode 13. I can't promise you it gets better, but ride with me if you're curious enough.

And of course, any comment and feedback will be appreciated. Thank you for reading and check out my other works if you're interested. <3

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