What It Takes

by ThatHaircut

Summary

Maggie is about to become Negan's first victim but her friend Gillian interferes. From there Negan faces a dilemma and decides to take her to the Sanctuary. As they get to know each other more, not without some difficulty, he discovers a side of himself he didn't even know was there...and more. // Not good with summaries sorry :) But have a shot at the story though!

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
Chapter One

Whistles***…

“I simply cannot decide!” Negan laughed as his eyes contemplated the line of people kneeling at his feet. “Wait, I’ve got an idea!” A devilish smile appeared on his face as he stepped closer to Rick, his barbed-wire bat ready to strike. Rick lowered his head, ready to take the first hit.

“Eenie…meenie…miney…moe. Catch a tiger by his toe…If he howlers let him go…My mother told me to pick the very best one and you…are…it!”

As the end of the bat aimed directly at her, Maggie literally stopped breathing. Her heart was beating so fast that her pulse echoed in her head like a deafening drum. She couldn’t think straight, images of her father, sister and Glenn filled her mind but the first thing she thought was the baby. *I have to save the baby.* At this moment, Glenn stood up in one quick motion and went to punch Negan

“Nooo, don’t!” he shouted. Unfortunately, Negan’s men were quicker and outnumbered him. They handled him fast and started to beat him as he fell to the ground.

“NO!…No, get him back in line” Negan ordered, an inch of annoyance audible in his voice.

“Please, don’t” Glenn begged as he struggled to get back up, in vain.

Another grin appeared on Negan’s face, rather mocking this time.

“All right, listen. Don’t any of you do that again, I will shut that shit down, no exceptions!” He turned his gaze back to Glenn “First one’s free, it’s an emotional moment, I get it” he winked.

“Please, please don’t do that, I’m begging you…” Glenn tried one last time

“Shh, shhh. Well fuck me, I feel you boy. I can see this is hard on you people but you guys, have killed a shitload of my men the other day. Now, you gotta understand, there are rules. One of you has to go and the rest just fucking walks free! I don’t know about you but the way I see it, the amount of generousness I’m showing you guys is way too fucking fuckity high!”

He went back to Maggie who was still under shock. Glenn had his tearful eyes fixed on her but her gaze wouldn’t meet his. It was empty, vacant, anywhere but here.

“I started something, gotta finish it. So…Anybody moves, anybody says anything, cut the boy’s other eye out and feed it to his father and then we’ll start!” He tightly gripped his bat with both hands “You can breathe, you can blink, you can fucking cry. Hell, you’re all gonna be doing that”. Glenn’s last whimpers echoed in the dark quiet night as Negan lifted Lucille above his head, ready to strike…

“Wait!” a female voice broke the heavy silence, taking the Savior’s leader by surprise “wait”.

Negan shut his eyes and held back a scream of rage. He looked at the disturbing protagonist, curious of what she had to say that was worth interrupting him in his twisted ritual. As he stepped closer he could tell that she was scared by her heavy breathing. Negan figured her out, he hadn’t really noticed her before, probably because he had been too busy trying to tell Rick who was now in charge.

As much as he wanted to teach her a lesson for challenging him in front of his men, he had to admit that this woman was the proud owner of a huge pair of balls.

“Kill me…not her.” She did not look at him and her eyes were glued to the ground. There was fear in her voice, it was trembling a little but she sounded sure. Negan had to process her words for a second. “Sweetheart…If you’re gonna talk to me, you need to raise your pretty head a little”
he said, really hoping that it would make her think twice about her proposal. It took her everything she had left in her to look him right in the eye but she wouldn’t back down just now, she couldn’t, not after everything they had been through. Her hazel irises met his darker ones and unexpectedly, he was the one to feel a cold shiver run down his spine.

“Kill me” she repeated.

Negan was a little troubled by this sudden change of plans and he tried his best to maintain his grin.

“Jesus fucking Christ, well fuck me, I might have underestimated y’all.” He bent down to be at the woman’s level and realized that she was a bit younger than he had thought.

“What’s your name, darlin?” He smiled.

“Gil-” she cleared her throat, she didn’t expect to have more talking to do. “Gillian”

“Mmmh, all right, all right, Gillian. Now, tell me why I would do that whereas my Lucille has already picked her lucky winner of the day? Are you two sisters or something?”

Gillian wasn’t sure if telling him the truth was going to have the expected result but she had to try. Sacrifice was not something she was afraid of, she had seen too many things to fear death at this point. However, she wouldn’t forgive herself if her attempt to save people ended up in a bloodbath.

“If you kill her…You kill two people.”

At that, Negan made a face, he didn’t understand right away. Just when she thought she needed to explain him the situation, he got up.

“Holy fucking shit…And you guys try to have a hit on me because I’m, apparently, not running a civilized community?! Your words, not mine, huh. Well, Rick, I gotta say I’m pretty disa-fucking-pointed. You guys were seriously gonna let Lucille have her way with a pregnant one ?!” He didn’t expect any answers. “Now, I’ve seen some goddamn motherfuckers in my life but hell, your little crew has just hit the top of that big fat pile of shit!”.

As he walked among Rick’s people again, he was still thinking about what he was going to do. Obviously, he wasn’t going to kill Maggie, that would be against his principles. First, she was pregnant and second, he indeed said that he would only kill one person for the time being. He scratched his beard for a good 20 seconds while his eyes wandered from the ground to the people in front of him, and finally to Gillian.

“But not you.” The almost sweet smile he gave her made her really uncomfortable. “You do realize what comes next?” he asked as he straightened his bat between them, raising his eyebrows in a funny way.

Gillian’s first reflex was to lower her head as she thought about being beaten to death. A bullet in the head was something but it was quick and very likely painless. She had the feeling that a barbed-wired bat would be very different…

“Nonono, my eyes are up here, Sweetheart.” He motioned for her to straighten up “Do you know what comes next?” He repeated.

“Yes” was the only thing she could say.

“Good. Only, the way you stood up for your friend few minutes ago, that never happens…That makes you special and I like special! The problem is, that troubles me now, because I don’t know what the fuck to do with you!”

Negan ran his tongue along his white teeth and passed his bat from his left to right hand, right to
left, again and again during what seemed like hours. Finally, he slightly turned to his right hand
man. “Simon, what do you think? I’m in a bit of an impass here…”
Simon reflected a moment, brushing his thick mustache with his fingers and giving Gillian an
exaggerated dubious look.

“Well, she’s got balls…” he paused

“She does” Negan agreed

“That’s always valuable” Simon continued

“Balls are, indeed, rare nowadays.” Negan looked down and took in the curves of her body with
hungry eyes. “And a sweet piece of meat on top of it all” he laughed.

As much as Negan liked to joke in front of Rick’s group and his own, he took the decision he was
about to make very seriously. His methods were questionable, so was the way he ran his
community but behind this dangerous façade, his primary goal was to keep his people alive, as
much as possible. Recruiting new persons permitted him to extend his empire but also to assure his
Sanctuary safety. Deep down he knew he wanted to take Gillian in but he wasn’t sure what to
expect from someone who, apparently, wasn’t afraid of him in a situation like that. He was so
often in control of everything that he never needed to take any risks with anyone, especially the
soon-to-be new recruits. But he had this feeling about this girl, sexual thoughts aside, has he had
said: she was special.

Negan got up and twirled his bat in the air before holding his gloved hand out to Gillian.

“Okay Sweetheart, you’re coming with me and that’s not an invitation you’re gonna decline.”
She didn’t dare make a move and her eyes were now questioning his. He tilted his head but his
smile was gone.

“Do not make me have to ask you again” he warned, his arm still towards her.

She bit hard on her jaw as she grabbed his hand and was strongly pulled up against Negan’s chest.
The irritation was clear on her face, she tried to escape from his grasp but he held tight on her,
decided to keep her really close. He hummed her hair.

“Now, don’t you try anything stupid, darlin’, or I guarantee you will be sorry” he said, barely
louder than a whisper. Gillian could smell his strong masculine scent and suspected a cologne. She
wondered how the hell people had time to take care of that sort of things during a fucking zombie
apocalypse, it was literally beyond her.

Negan made eye contact with Rick as he pressed Gillian harder against him.

“I got a feeling you wanna say something, Rick. Please, do tell us!” He smiled.
Rick cleared his throat, at this point even speaking seemed to be the hardest thing in the world.

“You don’t have to do this, there has to be another way, I swear. We can make it up to you” he
pleaded.
Negan suddenly let go of Gillian and hungrily walked towards Rick. He bent down and grabbed
him roughly by the collar to bring him closer.

“This is exactly how you make it up to me! 27 men, Rick. 27 of my people killed by your hand, I
take one of yours and you dare to fucking whine?! I’m even fucking surprised at my-fucking-self
on this one, showing mercy? That’s never happened before! The thing is, you guys look like you
understand the real meaning of community, and that’s something I haven’t seen for a very long
fucking time. Now, I know you can provide, a lot! I don’t wanna have you against me, I want you
to work for me, it’s really that simple.’’

He took his hand off Rick’s shoulder and got up.

“I take Gillian home today but next time…I won’t be that merciful, believe me.” He motioned for
Rick to look up at him with Lucille. “I’m going to say that one more fucking time for you, Rick,
to make sure you got this right. You so much as even try to fuck me over, there will be so much fucking blood that you won’t be able to fucking see. Is that clear ?’’

It took Rick at least 15 seconds to just nod and that didn’t suit Negan.
‘‘Speak when you’re spoken to !’’ he shouted ‘‘You, your all crew, you work for me, you answer to me, you provide for me, you belong to me! Yes or no ?!’’

‘‘Y-yes, yes’’ Rick stammered.

‘‘God dammit’’ Negan breathed before straightening up.

He was glad inside, almost relieved, even if he would never admit it out loud. Recruiting groups and making them work for you wasn’t always a piece of cake and Negan was more than satisfied with his new acquirement. Rick had the numbers, the resources and the walls of Alexandria to protect the Saviors’ supplies. Negan was no fool, he knew that the zero risk didn’t exist and that he had no assurance that the people of Alexandria wouldn’t riot or start a fight against him, bald as they seemed. However, he was convinced that, at least for now, he had made his point. Rick trembling, and all sweaty, almost shitting his pants, he could tell, confirmed that. This new collaboration promised to be very fruitful and full of surprises…

Gillian wasn’t sure as to why Negan had decided to take her in but having scavenged for more than a year alone, she had come to understand what men wanted. She took a quick look around and noticed that among the Saviors’ crew, at least ninety-nine percent were men. Her eyes stopped on Maggie and the look she gave her broke her heart. Gillian couldn’t quite define every emotion passing through her eyes: there was gratitude, so much gratitude, and guilt, like if she was seeking forgiveness. Gillian wanted to tell her that she expected no apologies, that she was willing to make that sacrifice for her and that it was her own decision. She didn’t say anything as the atmosphere was tensed enough right now.

Her attention went back to Negan as he approached her once more.
‘‘Oh, don’t worry’’ he smiled ‘‘I didn’t forget about you.’’ He gently grabbed her arm to guide her towards the RV, opened the door and stepped aside ‘‘After you, Gillian.’’ Her name rolled on his tongue like a sweet candy and he checked her ass, of course, as she got in the vehicle. In truth, it was also to enjoy the look of anger on Rick’s face than anything else…

‘‘I’m taking the RV too, Rick, in case you didn’t notice. We’ll pay you a visit in a week or so, make sure to have our supplies ready by that time. Remember: half your shit, I mean it. Otherwise…’’

Negan clapped his hands twice to gather his men ‘‘Okay, folks, time to head back ! C’mon, there’s work to do !’’ They didn’t need to be told twice, they grabbed their weapons, stuffed their things in the trucks and in a second at least a dozen engines started in a crushing sound, breaking the silence of the cold night.

Just before Negan could jump in the RV, Rick asked ‘‘When will she come back ?’’ Negan’s laugh made him realize that ‘will she come back’ was the more appropriate question.

‘‘I don’t think I can answer that…Focus on your job for now, then we can start talking business, huh ? Don’t forget that she’s supposed to be dead.’’ He said, giving him a dead-serious look. Rick nodded.

Negan turned his back on him, closing the RV’s door behind him. And then, they were alone.

Silence. It was all that was left to Rick and his group, along with tears to mourn the uncertain fate of Gillian. They looked at each other with blank expressions all over their faces, still shaken by what happened. Everything they fought for, everything they had built in Alexandria and long before was gone in a bunch of minutes because of one man. Half their stuff…how the hell were they supposed to live with that ? They were dozens in the community and already short on food. Not to mention the ammos which would be missed soon enough. Rick blamed himself for what
happened. He had been bold, too bold to think that he could beat Negan as easily as that when he attacked the outpost. That’s true, they had beaten the Governor at the prison, Joe and the people of Terminus but they knew nothing of the Sanctuary, of the Saviors, not their numbers, not their operations…Yet they attacked blindly, without any information or clue about what was waiting for them. They thought they had seen it all, that it couldn’t get any worse, whereas they didn’t know shit. Negan had summed that up perfectly well a few minutes ago. They had become too confident and now they were paying for it. Gillian was paying the hefty price.

Back then she and Morgan had been the ones to ask them to reconsider about attacking the outpost. Tonight she accepted to come, out of pure loyalty and respect, she could have stayed in Alexandria but she came and was now paying for their mistakes. Thinking about all this made Rick’s stomach turn, if she didn’t come back, he would not forgive himself.

Carl walked to him and laid a hand on his shoulder ‘’Dad, she’ll make it’’ he assured ‘’She’s strong.’’

Rick wasn’t too worried about her being able to defend herself, he knew she was an excellent fighter. It was the looks Negan repeatedly gave her, the way his men watched her that didn’t escape him. It didn’t take a genius to understand what men like them wanted from a woman, not to mention, and Rick had noticed that too, Gillian was an attractive woman.

‘’Yeah, I know’’ he managed without really trusting his own words.

‘’I shouldn’t have let her’’ Maggie’s trembling voice rose ‘’It’s my fault she’s out there now’’

‘’No it’s not, Maggie. She wanted to help you’’ Rick tried to reassure her.

‘’We have to get her back, we have to get ready to fight them, Rick’’ she grabbed his arm ‘’She can’t stay out there !’’

‘’I know, I know but we can’t do it now, they have the numbers and we don’t, it would be like signing our death warrant. We will get her back, I promise you that but for now we have to keep our heads down and do what he asks. We’ll make a plan, an elaborated one this time.’’ He took her head in his palms and kissed her forehead ‘’I promise’’.

‘’We have to get you to the Hilltop’’ he added.

‘’Those bastards took the stretcher’’ Sasha said

‘’I’ll carry her’’ Glenn said firmly

‘’Okay’’ Rick agreed ‘’It’s not too far now. If you need to take a break you tell us and Abraham will take over. I’ll look after Daryl, his gunshot wound seems…messy.’’

Silently, they all did what they had to do and progressed slowly towards the Hilltop. There was no walkers tonight, or just a few. As he watched them, Rick wondered if that was how life was going to be now, no joy, no laugh, no sadness either, only survival.
Dawn was slowly breaking outside, they had been rolling for at least fifteen minutes and Negan decided that the ride was too calm. “Not much of a talker are you?”

She almost jumped “Sorry, what?”

“Never mind, it’s good as it is. So, why the short hair, were you military or something back then?” Always the same question, Gillian could remember a few times when women asked her if she was wearing the short cut by choice, it got on her nerves sometimes.

“Why not? What about you?” she answered curtly

“Now, now, are you tryin’ to get me on my mood here? I just want to know you a little fucking more, we’re about to live together now…Sounds weird doesn’t it haha, I mean we just met” he was hoping for her to at least chill a little but she wasn’t up for it at the moment. “So?” he pointed her hair.

“I just like it…” she said

Negan rose his eyebrows “Care to elaborate…I’m just tryin’ to converse a little, really” he smiled and Gillian almost found it cute.

“It’s simpler, especially nowadays, I don’t wanna have it on my face while I’m out on a run or something”

“A run… so that’s what you do for your people?”

“’That and other things, yes. So what exactly am I to do for you?’” she decided to cut the bullshit, although the conversation was going nicely so far. Negan tilted his head and smiled at her ”Well, nothing too complicated by me: fucking contribute, of course! We’ll see what you can do, what you’re good at and you’ll simply work for me. Ain’t that a fucking opportunity of a lifetime, Sweetheart?” Gillian faked a smile. To be honest, after a few minutes spent with the guy she had thought he had other plans for her, in a more private sector…Not that she was disappointed, quite the opposite in fact, she was just surprised. Almost as if he had been reading her mind, ”Oh, and of course I’m looking forward to a little fucking gratitude from you, darlin’, for letting you live ya’ know… Be sure I’d be more than fucking happy to enjoy that fine little piece of ass of yours when I want it.”

“And I thought the world and men had changed…foolish, huh?” The expression on his face changed suddenly and he now looked pretty damn serious.

“Look at me” She didn’t need to be told twice. His brown eyes were fixed on her, any sign of joke or anything like that gone “I don’t rape women, we don’t rape women. Not one bit of that shit flies around my community. Did I make myself fucking clear?” She nodded

“Sounds pretty clear to me” she though necessary to add.

She couldn’t quite wrap her head around that man yet. Few minutes ago he was ready to bash a pregnant woman’s skull with a freaking barb-wired bat named “Lucille”, yet he appeared to be a man of his words, worst, a man with principles…
Within a second his devilish grin was back on his face, his lips curling into a wide smile, revealing a perfect line of white teeth.

“Hell, don’t get me wrong, Sweetheart, if you really are in need of amazing, unforgettable sex, I’d be more than happy to oblige” He softly brought his hand to her face and lifted her chin so that she was directly looking at him…once again. “I can be a real gentleman when I want to. Oh boy, we could have a fuckload of fun together, sweetie”

“So most men say” she said sarcastically.

“I’m not most men” he sounded serious again.

“Oh, believe me, you are definitely ‘most men’. By the way, as generous as your offer might be, I think I’ll keep my ass for myself, thank you.” Smile back on.

“Right, suit yourself, I have no doubt your hand will do the job just right” he said almost bursting out laughing while running his gaze along the curves of her body. “As for that chatty little mouth of yours, mmmh” he winked.

“Jesus, keep your distance” she said, completely repulsed by his last words. “I’m not interested”. She couldn’t help it, her mind started to run images of what he just said and it wasn’t pretty. It was a very nasty habit of hers to illustrate everything people said and she hated it, especially when she was facing a cocky, arrogant guy constantly trying to get under her skin.

“I guess we’ll fucking see about that princess, for now, as much as I’d like to continue this little talk with you, I believe we’ve reached your new castle and the first thing you need to do is get a little familiar with your new working place. Welcome to the Sanctuary! ” Negan proudly said, slightly pushing the curtains of the RV aside.

After arriving to Alexandria, Gillian thought that she would never see a bigger compound, as organized and protected. They had done a great job with it, managed to keep all the houses clean and livable, put every citizen to work for the good of everyone. Yet again she had been wrong, her breath was cut short as she got a glimpse of the huge factory or whatever that used to be, that was rising before her. They did not have the walls of Alexandria but they did have walkers, all tied up together to form chains that would dissuade anybody who would try to get close. As to how they managed to achieve something like that, Gillian had no answer, but was quickly enlightened.

Among the numerous walkers, she could discern some guys dressed in what seemed like some sort of prison outfit with a capital “A” written on their large sweatshirts. They looked really tired and the job didn’t seem safe at all. Gillian guessed that most of these people, if not all of them, weren’t doing this work by choice. As if the walkers were not enough, lots of menacing spikes filled the ground and created a path to the entrance of the factory. Gillian was taken aback as the RV abruptly stopped, it wasn’t exactly a very functional engine anymore.

“Damn, what a piece of shit !” Negan laughed, turning away from Gillian to contemplate his Sanctuary. “So, what do you think darlin’, she’s a beauty, ain’t she ?” Holy hell, that man was proud of his own doings, she thought. Although she had to admit that she was impressed, she absolutely didn’t want to say it for him, but he was waiting for an answer. “It’s…big” she managed.

“Yeah, lots of big things about me…” he smiled wickedly at her and she let out a flabbergasted sigh. “Wait ‘till you see the inside, it’s quite cozy in there. Well, it depends on what you work on, though…”

Gillian wondered what he meant by that and if she was going to be part of the people living in the “cozy area” of the Sanctuary. Also, it occurred to her that Negan had a very organized way of
running things, everything seemed to be working as in a…factory.

Negan, forever the gentleman, opened the door for her once again. Loads and loads of weapons was all she could see as she stepped foot on the ground. Every men and women standing at the gate had at least a rifle in their hands and a handgun at their belt. She counted more than a dozen ‘guards’ here, and by the size of the factory she could only assume that there were plenty of others inside. She thought about the time they had attacked the outpost, it seemed so damn stupid now, they had been so fucking wrong. In a way she hoped that this would teach them a lesson for later raids. Assuming, of course, that she would be part of it giving the actual context…

‘I know the sight is awesome, Sweetheart, but if you don’t mind we’re gonna move inside. I’m freakin’ freezin’’. She was pulled from her thoughts when he put his hand behind her back and slowly pushed her towards the entrance.

‘I don’t wanna be disturbed fellas, Gil and I are in for a loooong discussion’. All his men nodded like a bunch of robots, it was a pretty simple request after all, but it was clear that there was no place for disagreement with Negan.

The inside of the compound was unsurprisingly very empty with endless dark corridors, then again, it was a factory. Along the way, they met two guys mopping the floor dressed the same as the ones chaining the walkers outside. As Negan walked passed them, they immediately stopped their activity to kneel. Gillian couldn’t believe this, it was not community, it was fucking dictatorship. How could anyone agree to that in such difficult times ? She figured safety was probably the main reason.

‘I expect you to do the same in sometime, Gillian’ he spoke close to her ear.

‘That’s not happening, not now, not tomorrow, never!’ she firmly said. There was no way she was going to submit to that man, not that much anyway, but it wasn’t really up to her. Negan shoved her hard against the wall.

‘I’m gonna pretend I didn’t hear any of that’

‘No no no, you heard me well, I will not kneel before you, ever!’ her voice rose a tad. ‘Don’t you think the world is enough fucked as it is ? Do you really need to add another weight on these people’s shoulders and practically enslave them ? I mean what the fuck is this !?’

Standing up to Negan was not a great idea, Gillian knew that, and at the same time she had a feeling that he would not kill or harm her if she did. Nonetheless it was obvious that he was extremely pissed, he put one finger on her lips.

‘Some piece of advice, Sweetheart, don’t talk when you don’t know shit. Do you think those guys are unwilling ? Every single person who works here is there by choice’ Gillian coughed ironically

‘What choice ?’ And Negan’s face lit up

‘That, my dear, is exactly what I wanted to speak to you about. Let’s not talk here, huh, you never know about little fucking ears wondering around. C’mon, you’re so gonna love my quarters’

As they reached his rooms, Gillian noticed two men standing in front of a large wooden door.

‘What’s in there ?’ she asked. Negan turned to see what she was talking about.

‘Oh, I don’t wanna spoil the surprise, that comes later…if you’re willing, of course’

‘Wha-’
“Just come inside” he interrupted, holding the door for her.

Gillian stepped inside the large room and couldn’t hold back the “wow” that was on her tongue for a good moment. The dark paper paint gave a lot of charm to the room, the place was very spacious and looked like one of those expensive appartements you could find back in the days. Large bowls of fruits and other types of food had been laid on the counter, Gillian suddenly felt hungry. Leather sofas, bookshelves, various plants that looked too green to be real, whisky on the table and even some god damn hunting trophies on the walls. Just by standing in that room could make you forget about the apocalypse outside. Gillian’s eyes stopped on what she supposed to be Negan’s bed, kingsized with silk sheets and way too many pillows for one person. She was almost tempted to just crawl on it, the day had been exhausting and she could do with a little rest right now. Of course she didn’t do it, getting on his bed was out of the question. Instead she decided to take a look around, she was like a child in a candy shop. Houses in Alexandria weren’t bad but they weren’t that good either.

Seing her all amazed and lost brought Negan a strange feeling, something between pride and gratification. It was the second time now that this woman made him feel funny and he wasn’t sure if he liked that or not.

“Hey, have a sit down, you look like you’re gonna pass out” he proposed as he made himself comfortable on one of the sofas. Gillian sat on the opposite one as she felt better with a table between them rather than nothing at all.

“Care for a glass of something ? Water ? Whisky ?” he proposed

“No, thanks, I’ll be fine”

“Right,… I’m sure you’ve noticed a part of my crew on our way down here. The ones with the guns, they work for me. They get the food and supplies they need for their own use and also get to live in a nice little room, not as nice as mine, of course, but still rooms people would kill for.” He got up, poured himself a glass of whisky and rose it in the air before sitting back down “Cheers. You’ve got multiple options here, Gillian. If you want to, that’s the work you can have, you just have to ask. Or, you can work for points, with the guys outside or the ones mopping the fucking floor all day. Honestly you’d quickly realize that death would be better. Option number three…my personal favorite when it comes to you. C’mon, gotta show you a little something.” He got up, and led the way to the corridor. Gillian understood that they were going for the mysterious wooden door she had noticed before. Just before opening it Negan threw her a glance “Ready ?” he said playfully.

The heavy door squeaked as he pushed it, she wondered if he was hiding some kind of treasure inside. She fell from high as a group of women who lacked clothes appeared before her. It wasn’t exactly cold inside but wearing only bras and panties seemed slightly light to her…

“Good morning ladies, please let us not disturb you” he turned to Gillian “So, what do you think of my wives ?”

She stared at him, wide-eyed “Your wives ?” she couldn’t believe it.

“Yeah, my wives. I know how that must sound but they’re really nice girls, trust me”

“I need a moment” She practically ran out of the room to lay against the wall of the corridor, away from his guards. She needed to gather her thoughts for a minute. People were dying outside and this man just felt like he needed several fucking wives to keep him warm ! And were they even willing was the first thing she asked herself. She remembered what Negan had said about rape and all that but come on, who would accept this ? She tried to calm herself down as she heard his footsteps getting closer.
“You alright, darlin’ ?”

“Stop calling me that” she cut him

“What’s wrong ?” he shrugged

“What’s wrong ? What the fuck is this ?!” She almost shouted

“This is option number three, Gil’. If you don’t wanna work for me the way I suggested a few minutes before, that’s how you work, you become my wi- one of my wives.” He corrected himself “Food, supplies, extras and a fuckload of other things, in exchange you simply sell your soul to me…If you know what I mean”. Gillian thought she was going to punch him, she couldn’t believe how calm he was about the subject.

“Were you seriously hoping for me to chose this option when you spared me ? You dumb fuck” Negan took one step forward

“That is right, I fucking spared you, you could be in the fucking ground right now but you are here” He kept walking towards her as he spoke “You don’t wanna join the harem, fine, that is entirely up to you, like I said you have two other options, but don’t you fucking dare call me a dumb fuck, especially when my men are around” He had her trapped against the wall and put his hands on either side of her head. “So, how about a fucking sorry for starters, Gillian…” Somehow she found the strength to look him in the eye the all time, but her throat was beyond dry right now.

“I’m sorry” she managed.

“Who are you speaking to ?”

She rolled her eyes “I’m sorry, Negan”

“Good girl” he smiled and hummed her hair, her neck, his lips coming dangerously close to hers. Gillian didn’t dare make a move “You smell good”

“…Thank you” she whispered “Could you stop doing that, …please ?” she asked, only too conscious of the awkwardness of the situation.

“Mmmmh, please consider option number three, Gil’ ” He said as he drew back

“Yeah, I don’t think so” she assured him

“Damn, you don’t scare easy…I like that. Well, it’s breakfast time anyway, why don’t you take some time to think about all this.” He walked towards the stairs, yelling “Arat !! Come up here for a second” He addressed Gillian again “Arat’s gonna take you to your room, I have stuff to do, as you imagine. She’ll take you down to the main hall for lunch too.” With that he was gone and the woman named Arat was waiting for Gillian where another corridor crossed. She was dressed in a military vest and a white shirt, with slim pants and boots. Her skin was mixed and her curly hair was tied back in a messy bun, she was pretty and there was no doubt, she looked very healthy. Negan hadn’t been lying about the way people could live in the Sanctuary.

“Hi, you must be Gillian, I’m Arat. Come on, it’s this way” she motioned for Gillian to follow her. Apparently her room was on the same level as Negan’s. There were a lot of other rooms in the hallway, she supposed that it was where most of his men stayed.

“How do you like the Sanctuary ?” Arat asked her

“Oh, it’s…cozy, I guess”
“It is for some, not at all for others, but I’m sure he went over that with you” Gillian acquiesced

“Met his wives yet?”

“I have, not personally but still…Am I the only one who thinks that’s nuts?”

“I don’t know, those girl’s have been given a choice, they chose. There’s a hell of a lot to say about Negan but he has always been straight with us girls, that’s rare today, I know some of our crew members who wouldn’t be has…understanding if they were in charge.”

They arrived at her room, as Negan had said, it was not as nice as his but hell, there was a nice looking bed, a tiny kitchen set with a dining table and a personal bathroom in the back. “Well, there you go, I think you will be able to take your own clothing and stuff like that when we head to your community…Alexandria, is it?”

“Yes” For some reasons Gillian had forgotten about it for a little while

“Take your time to settle, I’ll come back to get you for lunch. If Negan hasn’t asked you yet, I can take you around the Sanctuary after, if you want?” Arat proposed

“Hum, sure, yeah I’ she was lost in her thoughts again “I’m sorry, it’s just-”

“Hey, it’s all right, I’ll leave you some time alone” she smiled and took her leave, closing the door behind her.

Gillian laid on the large bed, looking at the ceiling. The room was very quiet, it was perfect for now, as she really had to start thinking what the hell she was going to do now.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you all for reading ;) , comments and kudos are welcome of course ! Hope you're enjoying this story so far, I'm still not sure where it's going but I'll do my best to make something good out of it ;)
Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

There it is ! Third chapter ! In this story Carson is closer to the character in the comics, who is actually the Hilltop's doctor (if I'm not mistaking...). Hope you'll enjoy this one. Comments and Kudos welcome !

It was a knock at the door that woke her up, she didn’t know how long she had been sleeping. She rushed at the door, Arat was waiting on the other side, an AR-15 on her shoulder. “That’s procedure, don’t mind it”

“Oh, it’s not that, it’s a cool piece” Gillian smiled

“Familiar with those ?” Arat asked, interested

“Quite a bit, yeah, I used to have a couple of these back in Alexandria”

“Cool, lots of people don’t even know what they’re shooting with today, it’s good you’re here !” she gave her a wink ”Anyway, you hungry ?”

“Starving” Gillian admitted.

Along their way to the main hall, they met a few people. Their politeness surprised Gillian, they really seemed different from the people who had stopped them while they had travelled to the Hilltop. They seemed human, sociable, nice even, almost as if they weren’t the same people. Gillian took the opportunity of this little walk to get familiar with the surroundings, taking note of the adjacent corridors. Arat explained to her that each floor corresponded more or less to a specific working area, the soldiers being placed at the first and second floors to be ready as quickly as possible in case there was an emergency.

All the space had been filled with various items, decorations and furniture, you could easily forget that it was a factory. The main hall on the other hand kept all the factory aspects. Gillian couldn’t believe how huge this only room was, you could put hundreds of people in it. It looked like a giant cafeteria with endless tables aligned and some kind of self service stand in the corner.

In Alexandria this was very different, they all had a private house. Gillian would dine with four or five people at most but she was very often en tête à tête with her plate. The hall was very noisy, you could guess the affluence without even looking at it. But what could you expect by putting so many people together…Even though the environment looked warm and welcoming she spotted some people who seemed less than reassured to be there. Unlike the rest their clothes looked dirty and torn, but Gillian could tell they weren’t prisoners. She guessed that they were probably the ones working for points, and Negan had told her the truth, it didn’t look much fun.

That day the menu proposed some kind of tomato salad for starters, the main course was a little more furnished, there were potatoes, spinach, a weird soup, corn and beans. And for disert numerous fruits and cakes were disposed on the tables. The first thing that came up to Gillian’s mind was if all this food was half the shit of other communities. She came to the point of wondering if they even did food supply run at all, with all this they didn’t even need to.

She sat with Arat at a secluded table and decided to take a tomato salad with spinach and potatoes.
It was all served on a tray and she smiled as she couldn’t help but think of her time in high school. To drink they both took water but Gillian noticed that a few guys had sodas on their tray. She had her head almost stuffed in her plate but the weight of the looks she was given was so heavy that she could literally feel it.

“Is everyone staring?” she asked, desperate

“Pretty much, yeah, we’re very curious about newcomers here” Arat admitted “By the way, I just thought you should know, they’re calling you the chosen one. Trust me you’ll get over it”

“What? Why?”

“Negan did spare you, that’s not something he usually does. Actually it came from one of his wives, Karen, a total bitch if you ask me but that is not the point here. You’re damn gorgeous, he knows it, she knows it, makes her jealous is all” Arat said, her mouth full of beans. “A woman joining the community is not a big deal, a woman joining the community because Negan spared her? Everybody loses their minds!”

“Is that going to be a problem for me?”

“God no. Only Negan can make a move here, anyone who comes near you is gonna bite the dust real hard.” Arat reassured her.

After a while two men came to say hello to Gillian, the first one was Joey, a little guy who didn’t seem to go easy on the chocolate cakes. He was pretty nice, just as his pal Isaac, an afro american guy who looked really interested in Arat. They talked for a few minutes before the two men had to get back to work. Gillian couldn’t help but ask Arat if there was something going on between her and Isaac. Her answer was rather vague but there was no doubt these two were flirting or something.

“Oh, I forgot to tell you, Negan wants you to see Carson, our doctor, for basic medical checks. We can go now if you’re done?” Arat asked

“Sure, I’m not very hungry anyway” Gillian stood up and brought her tray back, closely followed by Arat.

Gillian realized that they were walking towards one of the first rooms she had seen coming in for the first time. “He’s very nice, you’ll see. And if you need to talk to him don’t hesitate, he’s kind of my personal psychiatrist, trustworthy on top of that” Arat said in a playful tone.

She knocked at the door and Carson appeared on the threshold. He was a sweet looking man, you could tell only by the sight of him that he was a really nice guy. He seemed to be in his late thirties, he was dressed in black slim pants and a jean shirt with the sleeves rolled up.

“’There she is’ he said enthusiastically, giving her the sweetest smile. He greeted Arat and they chatted a few seconds before she took her leave.

Gillian used this little moment to eye the room. The nursery was well provided, there was a large examining table at the center and the place was clean, it felt like a real hospital room. She wondered what these medical tests consisted in, surely he was going to take her pulse or something, measure her blood pressure, examine her maybe…just like the old days. The sound of Carson closing the door brought her back to the present. He was a bit smaller than her, actually she was rather tall for a woman, thanks to the high school volley club. The man scratched his stubble and invited her to sit on the examining table.

“Gillian, is it?” she nodded “Nice to meet you, I’m Carson, I take care of everyone here in terms
of medical treatments and all that sort of things. I’m going to check on your blood pressure now, if you’ll let me.” he said as he went to grab his equipment.

“Of course” Gillian straightened herself on the table and held her arm up for him to wrap the armband around it. Along the way he asked her if she had any kind of chronic pain or allergies, any specific treatment to follow. It turned out she was a perfectly sane woman. He started to tell her about himself, his story and his past and Gillian progressively opened herself a little to the guy. It was very easy to talk to him, he knew a lot of things on everything and always added a funny line to ease the atmosphere.

“Could you lie down for a minute, I’m going to do a quick examination” he said as he ordered his equipment on one of the counters and Gillian fell back on the table, positioning herself properly. For some reason, she felt her pulse rush as he leaned over her “Do you mind ?” Carson asked as he gently grabbed the aim of her t-shirt.

“It’s okay, go ahead” she allowed him.

The shirt was lifted up to the bottom of her breasts and Gillian could feel the cool air of the room brushing against her skin. At the first contact with his hands she shuddered but his palms were warm and it felt…awkwardly good.

After the full check for some reasons they started to talk about Arat and Isaac and about how obvious their attraction was. Carson admitted that he frequently helped Isaac building his relationship with Arat and succeeded to make Gillian burst out laughing at that golden piece of information.

“Sounds like we’re having a fuckload of fun in here !” Negan’s voice rose from the doorstep. Gillian, as improbable as it seemed, had forgotten about him for a little while. Carson waved his hand towards him “Hi, Negan, we just finished the checking, you’ll have no problem with her, she’s sane as a newborn !” he proudly said.

“A clean girl, that’s just perfect ! One more reason for you to take on the easy job” Carson lowered his head, knowing exactly what he was referring to. Negan walked around the room before stopping close to Gillian “Have you considered your options, Sweetheart ?” he snaked his arm around her shoulders.

“I did” she said embarrassed and tried pointlessly to escape his grasp.

“Do tell, darlin’, my fingers are crossed” he gave Carson a childish exited face

“I’ll work for you”’

“For fuck’s sake, woman !” he barked, landing his fist heavily on the nearest piece of furniture “What made up your mind, huh ? It’s Carson ? His fucking legendary magic touch all over your skin, is that it ? Tell me doctor”’ he walked towards Carson “did you stroke her good, right to the soft spot ?” Gillian blushed so hard that she could feel her head grow hot, that didn’t escape Carson

“C’mon leave the poor girl alone for a bit”’ he said with a smile. Negan threw him a surprised look

“Okay, all right, I’m just fucking with you guys” he gave Carson a friendly tap on his back.

The two of them had obviously been in the Sanctuary for a while and become great friends. One of the two was of course more reserved, reasonable, polite and reliable than the other…Negan made his way to leave the room
“I’ll leave you to your business Carson, we’ve had a huge supply arrival this morning gotta check it out’” he stopped on the doorstep, as if waiting for something but nobody moved so “I’m not going alone, Gillian” he breathed out of slight irritation. Without a word she did as she was told and Carson watched her do so with a compassionate look.

“I’ll see you soon, feel free to come here whenever you need, okay?” he said in a soothing tone

“Of course” she managed to offer him a smile, it was the least she could do to repay him for being so understanding with her and for kinda containing Negan’s behavior.

Carson had known Negan for many years now, he had come to understand the man somehow, but he was often a little uncomfortable with most of his methods. Inside he knew that Negan was simply playing with people, the problem being that he didn’t see the offensive side of it, he didn’t take into account that the majority of the people inside the Sanctuary’s walls were tired, exceeded and definitely not in the mood for his bad jokes. Carson had tried to reason Negan a couple of times already, but the man hadn’t changed, it was just the way he was. As the only doctor of this very large community he had seen what people went through by healing them, talking to them and spending time with them. He had seen how most of them adapted and how others fell into madness, some to their very death.

Negan and Gillian arrived to the main hall, it was completely empty and seemed even bigger than before. Sometimes, when a large load of supply arrived, Negan’s men would clear the hall and let him check on it if he requested. They were the ones to do that bidding usually, but now, Negan felt like he wanted to have some time alone with Gillian.

The pile, or more like the mountain of food rising in front of them made her think of how they were ridiculously short on food in Alexandria. It was really one of the few things missing back in that place, other than that it was paradise.

Negan walked around the booty like a proud rooster, taking a mouthful of one apple standing there. ”Mmmmh, god ! Tastes like a sweet bitch. Want some ?”

“No, I'm good”

“You don’t know what you’re missing” he gave her a wicked grin

“What ? I just don’t feel like eating apples now is all’” she crossed her arms over her chest

“I was talking about you not taking option number three”

‘Aren’t we over that yet ? You offered me a choice, Negan, the three options were not exactly appealing to me but I chose one, can you at least respect that ?’”

“I surely can. I was just saying…for you. You’ll probably come back to me, eventually.” he said as he threw the apple away. She ignored his comment, she wanted to focus on one important matter now

“When do I start ?”

Negan frowned “Are you seriously that excited ?” he asked impressed

“No” she assured “the earlier I start, the earlier I get back to Alexandria. Right?…”

Negan decided play with her nerves a little and did not respond. Instead he gave her a very suggestive look.

“Negan ?” she unfolded her arms and walked towards him in an intimidating way ‘’Don’t keep me in the dark like that! When will I go back?” she asked and was suddenly worried about the answer he would give her. Inside she cursed herself for having been so damn naive, for believing
it would be so simple. Nothing was simple nowadays.

During that night, when they were all lined up in the cold, she had made some kind of deal with Negan. Letting her go meant that he was the one fucked in the deal and that was not going to happen. His words confirmed what she feared.

“I’m afraid I don’t have a specific date in mind, Sweetheart. I don’t recall talking about you going back”. Her reaction surprised him, it’s was obvious she wanted to protest or say something but whatever it was, she kept it for herself. Negan being Negan, decided to try her a little.

“Nothing ? No objection or some shit like that ? I’m fucking impressed, Sweetheart !”

“Well, you’re right, you never mentioned it” she simply said “I respect the engagements I make”. Negan tilted his head as a sign of courtesy.

“Wise choice, Sweetheart, very wise” he mumbled

Gillian got closer to the pile of food and supplies, the size of it was very impressive, then again, once you were reminded how it was all stolen it kind of lost its greatness.

“Anything from Alexandria ?”

“Nope, we haven’t visited yet. I’ll let you know when we do.”

“Will I be able to come ?” she had little hope for it after what he had said, but if there was one opportunity for her to see her friends, she had to take it. Negan ran one hand through his beard, an old habit of his, he hadn’t decided yet. From what he had seen, her group was unpredictable, they were not more than 30 people his guys had said, yet when they were together they could achieve big things. Even if Rick showed fear the other night, it was important to remember that he had ruled for a long time and that his group had become very confident along the way. Negan’s main priority now was to break that confidence, to tear appart this little flame that could make them think of a plan to attack the Sanctuary and get their friend back.

“I guess we’ll fucking see about that, Gil. Entirely depends on you and your behavior inside these walls” he said whereas he somewhat had decided he probably wouldn’t agree on it later.

“There’s a run tomorrow, a big one, you’ll be a part of it. It’s not too far from here but we haven’t stepped foot near it yet. We’ll see how you do, then we can discuss some arrangements.”

Gillian wondered if he would let her carry a gun, from what he said it was a potential dangerous spot. The last thing she wanted was to die in duty…for Negan.

“Thank you” she shyly said, after all any sign of courtesy towards him was beneficial to her, even a thank you he didn’t ask for. And hell was he delighted by this little gesture, the large smile displayed on his face was unmistakable.

He chose not to say anything about it and let her be for a little while, as far as he was concerned she hadn’t caused any problems thus far and he couldn’t help but salute the calm she showed giving the situation.

There was something about her, he sensed, that made him want to know her a little more, personally speaking. He figured that he might have to try a new strategy to get to her, a more retained behavior maybe. Whatever it was, it was going to be difficult for him, he never adapted to people, it was always the other way around. Gillian caught a glimpse of this ‘thinking Negan’, she could hardly tell that he was such an ass the rest of the time.

“Anything else you required ?” she asked, after the room had been plunged in complete silence
for several minutes? For a split second his eyes met hers and she could have sworn she had seen a feeling of deep confusion in his dark pupils.

“’No, have some fucking rest, there’s a big run tomorrow, remember? And eat well, you never know how long it can fucking last’” he said dry and she watched him leave the hall in disarray, quietly, no joke or funny comment. He looked frustrated, upset even. Gillian hoped it wouldn’t play against her.

She took a look around and seeing there was nobody there she grabbed one chocolate bar from the stock. She decided to head back to her room, she indeed needed rest. She walked through the endless corridors of the factory, corridors which were particularly silent this late afternoon. She walked silently, hands stuffed deep inside her pockets, tired and confused by what had just happened.
It was nearly four in the morning, Gillian could see the very first lights of the rising sun through the window. She hadn’t slept much, the day’s run occupied too much space in her mind. Though she had done hundreds of runs at least, but this time was different and it got her extremely stressed out.

She poured herself a glass of water, there were sodas and beers in the fridge but it wasn’t exactly what she needed now. The glass was emptied in one smooth shot and Gillian went to sit at the center of the room on the large rug. Legs crossed, hands on her knees, she straightened her back and tried to control her breathing. It was Morgan who taught her that, when she joined Rick’s group she had been alone for more than a year and had serious trust issues which caused her to be tensed very often. It became a second nature of hers, whenever she felt something was going to fast for her, she would lose herself in meditation.

Her pulse started to sound clearer in her head and was slowing significantly. Soon, forty five minutes had passed and Gillian finally felt that all the bad waves had been washed away. She could go back to bed now that she was able to afford some sleep. There were at least three hours left and she intended to use them.

The large covers were thrown up to her chin, the contact of the cold sheets with her naked arms making her shiver but were soon warmed up by her presence. It was her first night at the Sanctuary, she realized. Few images of her friends in Alexandria made their way in her sleep, merry images, thankfully.

Outside, already, some prisoners had started their work. Aligning the walkers again, again and again, putting their life at risk every second for one man. Later this morning it was a dreadful cry of pain that woke most of the people, Gillian among them.

Without hesitating a second, she grabbed her coat and rushed in the corridor, almost kicking the door down on the way. Outside the cries of agony continued to rise and people had started to gather round the bloody scene.

Gillian finally arrived, out of breath, the factory was indeed a gigantic place.

“Aaaaargh !! Help me, please ! My goddamn leg !” the man screamed as he tried to get away from the walker who had ripped part of his leg. The sight was horrible, part of his detached limb was still hangin’ from him, lifeless, because of some skin that somehow refused to let go. One of his partners was still holding the chain and was trying to scatter the remaining walkers, in vain, and he apparently wasn’t going to try any harder.

Gillian looked at the guards with stunned eyes, they were just standing there, watching what was happening before them. “Aren’t you gonna do something ?!”

The man shook his head no “He got bit, woman, ain’t nothing I or my guys can do ‘bout it” he
He got bit, woman, ain’t nothing I or my guys can do ‘bout it” he said in the most indifferent way.

It didn’t matter who the screaming man was, she couldn’t let him or anyone die like this. She forcefully pushed the guard who lost his balance and grabbed his knife before he fell to the ground.

“Hey, what the fuck d’ya think you’re doin’ ?!” he shouted

She easily climbed the barbed wire fence and landed on the other side with the prisoners. Throwing herself on the first walker who was about to make another victim, she held him by the back of the neck, or what was left of it, and planted the knife right through his earhole. “Get away from here, go get against the fence !” she threw, putting down a second walker. When she reached the suffering man he had nearly passed out from blood loss. Gillian gently tapped his cheek to wake him up. “What’s your name ?” she urged him. He was still very dizzy but had caught the question. “C’mon, what’s your name ?” she repeated, panting.

“N-Nigel” he answered with difficulty

“Okay, Nigel ! Listen, I need you to stay with me so we can get you out of here. Tilt you head if you got that. You got that ?” He tilted his head “All right, let’s do this”.

Gillian got back on her feet and grabbed Nigel, curling his chest with her arms to drag him backwards near his friend. She addressed the people on the other side of the fence, who were watching with stunned expressions. “Somebody get Carson, now !” The guard stepped forward and spit to the ground before shouting angrily at her

“I ain’t taking orders from you, bitch !”

Suddenly, a strong hand gripped his collar hard and he was flipped around, face to face with Negan. He brought his face closer to make his point.

“Get your fat ass to Carson, Jake, and I mean right fucking now.” The man didn’t even try to bargain and got on his way

“Yes, Sir.”

Gillian didn’t have the time to see all that, too busy ending the four walkers left. Negan watched her do her thing, it was quick, clean and effective, she really was that good. He felt something hot rising deep inside of him, and didn’t even noticed he was smiling. He looked away and told himself he really needed to calm the fuck down and buy some self-control.

Just as Gillian was about to kill the first roamer, he needed to cut the performance short

“Leave this one be ! There’s one missing to complete the chain, he’ll do.”

Gillian cursed him under her breath, looking at the two prisoners, there was no doubt they were still shocked by the experience, so she decided to do it herself…her way.

Pushing the walker down, she used the time he took to get back up to reach the end of the chain. Positioning herself behind the roamer, she used all the strength she had in her and plunged her chained fist through his back, his rotten guts and his belly. The same fist ripping it open, letting blood spread out in a huge splash. Multiple expressions of disgust and repulsion emerged from the gathered people, some of them looking away or hiding their eyes to avoid the disgusting spectacle.

Gillian shook her hand to get the blood off and fixed the chain properly to a spike.

The two prisoners were brought back to the other side of the fence. One tough guy carried the injured one, he was still screaming in pain. Carson arrived panting, a first aid kit under his arm. Looking at the poor man’s leg, it didn’t take him more than a second to realize that the kit wasn’t going to be enough. Gillian grabbed his arm and brought him close to speak more privately. This little intimate gesture didn’t escape Negan who rose his eyebrows in disbelief and laughed to himself quietly.
"He’s been bitten just above the kneecap, it’s risky but there’s always a chance we can make it. We’re gonna have to hurry". She pressed him. A look of deep confusion appeared on Carson’s face.

"You mean cut the entire-"

"The entire leg, yes. Look, I know it’s a big piece but we have to give it a go"

Carson was shaking from head to toe, he had had to amputate a few people of half their member before but the entire leg was something entirely new. Negan had never been angry at him after the loss of a patient because he knew he had done his best, but from his perspective, Carson couldn’t bear a failure especially when it came to saving someone’s life.

Gillian saw the doctor starting to panic over the task at hand, he didn’t trust himself, she figured. "Hey, hey" she took his hands in hers "You can do it, but time is against us, the longer we wait the more complicated it’s gonna be."

Carson looked deep in her irises, they were full of hope, determination, and somehow he managed to reach inside of them and it gave him strength.

"Okay let’s do this. Tom get Nigel to the infirmary now, Casey I’m going to need the finest piece of steel that we have, clean it and disinfect it. Come on, we ain’t got much time, boys!"

Gillian was about to follow the mouvement to the infirmary, but she crossed Negan’s gaze and it was clearly saying get your ass here.

She expected a filthy comment, a little remark at least. Huge disappointment. He just stared at her with that now famous grin on his face. Gillian was a bit in a hurry there.

"Got something to tell me? Otherwise I think I can help back there."

"Quite a speech you must have given our dear doctor Carson to get him back on the horse…Is it already settled, you two?"

"C’mon, jealous already? One, we were just talking, two, I don’t have time for that and three, I don’t intend to stay here forever."

"That last part is not exactly up to you" he reminded her with pride. She wasn’t in the mood for arguing about this now and turned to leave but Negan caught her forearm.

"I appreciate what you did for Nigel, thanks to you he might be able to make it to the end."

Gillian briefly smiled at him

"Letting people die is not what I do, no matter who the person is" she glanced at the building behind her "I better be going, to make sure he does make it to the end." She surprised herself by winking at him as she turned away.

Negan watched her as she started to run towards the infirmary, she ran to it like her life depended on it. Only it was Nigel’s life, a guy she knew nothing about, who worked for Negan. She could have died out there, yet didn’t hesitate, he thought, one second and she could have been gone, because only one second is what it takes.

The nature of his interest for her had gone from sexual to something else. He was completely in the dark when it came to her personality, just as she was with his, and he wanted to know her better, needed to. He knew he was playing a dangerous game by wanting to get closer to her, but the challenge was too tempting for him not to jump right in. God knows he couldn’t resist a good challenge, especially with a reward like Gillian at the end of it.

In the infirmary people were rushing from every corner of the room to prepare the improvised surgery session. Carson had gathered something close to a ton of bandages, extra doses of morphine and other anesthesia products, a scalpel, scissors and had his gloves ready. Casey, has Negan had requested, had brought the finest blade of the house…which was none other than Michonne’s saber. Gillian couldn’t help but smile only at the sight of it, glad that her friends’s
spirit followed her to that place. Carson addressed the people in the room.

“Okay, thank you all for putting this together so quickly, now I’m gonna need you to clear the room for the operation. Tom, Clayton, you stay, we’re gonna need strong hands to hold him down”. Gillian was about to leave the room like everybody else but the doctor called after her.

“Gillian!” she turned to face him “You too, stay”.

She held her hand in the air “I don’t- I’m not qualified for all of this” she protested

“But I need you there. Believe me, you’ll help more than you think” he then motioned her waist “Here, give me your belt” he politely asked.

Negan was standing on the doorstep, surprisingly very silent, ready to watch the day’s entertainment. As Gillian took off her belt Carson told her to tie it firmly at the man’s ankle to hold the leg down. He started to remove his belt as well “That will be for the tourniquet”.

The scene was comical from Negan’s view: those two removing their belts and his very creative mind, when it came to sex, working full force at the same moment. Equally focused, only on a very different matter, Carson handed Michonne’s katana to Clayton, hoping that his prominent biceps would permit him to perform the cleanest cut possible. With Tom he positioned himself to hold on Nigel’s arms and torso. Gillian used her weight to immobilize the untouched leg.

They all looked at each other, waiting for the right moment, and then Carson nodded to Clayton. He did three blank downward strokes to really locate the cutting spot while Carson tried to reassure and soothe Nigel. With one swift powerful move, the blade came crashing through Nigel’s leg and on the table. The morphine did little to relieve the pain, a scream rose from the room and echoed across the entire compound. They gave each other incredulous looks, what stood before them was a scene of rare violence, the blood started to spill everywhere and it took them a few seconds to realize it would be wise to do something about it. Tom approached the detached limb with a look of distaste.

“Let me help you with that” Carson emerged from behind him and grabbed the leg carefully. Tom and Clayton then easily moved the man’s body onto the bed. The doctor addressed Gillian “Are you comfortable with this?” he showed Nigel’s now unconscious body.

“Huh, y-yeah, sure” she stuttered.

She unrolled the bandages and placed the bottle of disinfectant on the table.

“You all good?” Clayton asked

“Yeah, we’ll be fine, you’re free to go” Carson dismissed both men and positioned himself in front of the large opening at Nigel’s remaining upper thigh. He spilled the disinfectant on the wound and the scalpel. “Could you light a fire and put the saber on it for a while? Oh, and wash the blade first please” Gillian executed herself. Meanwhile Carson inspected the cut, Clayton had done a pretty good job, but some bits of skin were still dangling around. Gillian watched him perform his work, it was an extremely meticulous operation and she could see that he was trying to keep it as steady as possible despite his shaking hands.

“You’re doing good” she reassured him, turning to the burning blade “I think the saber’s ready” she informed.

“Good, hand it over, please”.

With care he grabbed the handle and applied the scalding steel in the bloody wound. Carson thanked God for Nigel being unconscious, he had heard so many screams, cries of pain in this room, it always remind him that the job could have been done better, differently. Gillian felt like throwing up at the sight of the operation, it was a little more than she could handle so she looked to the opposite direction and realized just now that Negan had taken his leave. finally, the leg had been patched up and Carson’s gloves were soaked with blood like never before, the opaque liquid
progressing slowly on his right forearm.

“I’m gonna start a perfusion,” he announced. Gillian spun around

“Do you know his blood type?”


“Who’s gonna...donate the blood?” she questioned

“I am.”

“What is he?”

“O-negative” he answered. Her type too. She had never given her blood, nor before or after the events. Not that the sight of blood flowing disturbed her or anything, it just wasn’t something she had thought about at the time. As she reflected, Carson was injecting multiple products that she didn’t know to Nigel and started to get the perfusion instruments ready. When he took off his jean shirt, Gillian noticed a plaster on his arm, at the ‘perfusion point’. Then it struck her.

“Exactly how many times have you done that recently?” she asked suspiciously and he gave her an hesitant look.

“A lot” he admitted. Gillian wanted more than anything to be useful and it certainly wasn’t Negan who was going to grant her that privilege.

“I can do it” she proposed but he shook his head

“No no no, you’re supposed to go on a run, Negan will require you kickin’ two hundred percent” he countered without wanting to appear rude.

“Actually I don’t know that” she said “he wants me panting beneath him on his bed, not out there with a gun in my hands” she blatantly stated. Carson cleared his throat, clearly embarrassed but also sympathetic towards her condition. He knew she was probably right and he of all people understood how it felt to be useless, having experienced it each time somebody had died under his care. So he accepted her aid.

“All right then, tough girl” he conceded “Sleeves up, please”. He placed a chair for her beside the bed. As she sat her eyes were glued to the needle, it was huge, bigger than the ones she was used to. Her heart tightened a little “Does it hurt?” he looked surprised by her question “I mean, it looks pretty big to me” she pointed the needle

“Oh, I’m not worried for you” he winked and took her arm in his hand, rapidly cleaning the skin with a wet coton. Like a kid would do, she kept her eyes on the catheter as it disappeared beneath her flesh and watched the blood make its journey across the tube. Carson was looking at her looking at it, a genuine smile spread on his face.

“People usually don’t stare” he said

“Really?” he nodded “I find it...beautiful...in its own way” she turned her gaze back to the tube as she spoke “The blood is not yours anymore, yet it still serves another purpose. Keeping someone alive. That is beautiful. The course of the blood becomes life. It means a lot to me, saving lives, even if it’s the last thing I do” she confessed before chuckling “God, it must sound so stupid, sorry”

“No, on the contrary, it’s good to be able to talk about this today, trust me” he defended her

“You have a very peaceful, wise way to see things” Gillian didn’t know why she was telling him all this but it just seemed right to talk to him.

“Spirituality, meditation and buddhism. A friend of mine, very good friend of mine, he taught me
a lot about all of those. Save while you can, Men, animals and everything that can feel. I felt like I needed those boundaries after the contamination and everything I’d seen and done to survive it”.

As he was listening to her, Carson realized that he had missed those kind of conversations. Every men, women who stepped foot in this room talked about how many walkers they had killed, how Negan had bashed someone’s skull, or even who they wanted to shag. As a doctor and sort of life keeper it had become tiring to be hearing only from death and violence. Gillian inhaled deeply and started to feel a little dizzy, her eyes seemed to be cover with a veil.

“Are you alright?” Carson asked, concerned

“Yeah, I’m fine. I guess it’s the expected effect, right?”

“Yes, must be. I’ll get you something to eat and drink” he opened the door “Anything you want in particular?”

“No, anything will do, thank you, Carson” she smiled

“You're welcome”. And he closed the door leaving her with Nigel.

It wasn’t midday yet but the morning’s event had been intense and the simple idea of doing a run later just made her want to sleep forever. She decided that the nursery was her favored place from now on, with Carson in it. He truly had a reassuring presence, he wasn’t like all the others, wanting to prove himself and constantly licking Negan’s arse all day long. And of course there was Arat, who was apparently the only decent female around the place. There were some female fighters, not many but still, only they all seemed to be seeking for something, recognition maybe, talking like the world belonged to them. These were people who liked to be in charge a little too much, who had taken pleasure in bullying others, and this simply wasn’t Gillian’s way.

Exhausted, she decided to take the little time she had to truly rest and wait for Carson’s return. She looked at her arm where the needle rested, and realized that after all, this was a small price to pay for the life of Maggie, though her primary goal was still to return as soon as possible to her friends, one way or another. But she told herself that for now everything was not so bad, and she hoped it was going to stay that way.
Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Sooooo sorry for the long delay, wasn’t really inspired last week, haha, but here is the fifth chapter! Hope you enjoy it :) And massive thanks to those who are leaving Kudos and follow the story, it really motivates me to write more and more of this!

Negan was panting hard, his breathing erratic as he pounded into the woman writhing beneath him. Drops of sweat had started to flow along his forehead, neck and down along his spine. Karen had her finger nails scratching his back, pushing him deeper inside her.

“Mmmmh, you feel so good” she breathed. As her ‘wife’, she had of course an obligation to tell him how wonderful he felt, but the truth was, he really was good and he knew it.

“I know how you like it” he grunted in the crook of her neck “And do you know what I’d fucking like?” he asked in a deep voice.

“Tell me” she said, running her hands all over his torso, restless. He brought his lips at her ear, speaking just above a whisper

“Get down there and …suck me off” he said. And it wasn’t a request. They switched position on the wooden king sized bed, Negan positioning himself on his elbows to watch her perform her art, Karen crawling on the mattress in a very feline way until she was between his thighs. She licked her lips as she began to come dangerously close to his protruding crotch, never leaving his eyes during the process. Extremely slowly, she planted an open mouthed kiss on the tip of it and he inhaled deeply, savoring the painful rhythm she had decided to go with. With one hand he caressed her cheek, putting the rebel hair away behind her ear. It had always been his favorite part of sex with his wives, he didn’t feel anything for any of them, therefor even if there company was always welcome and enjoyable when he needed it, he preferred a good, less intimate blow job. In this case he didn’t need to see their faces or ear them fake an orgasm or two. And also he didn’t have to perform and pretend, which was a good thing because at this very moment, another woman’s face was running through his mind.

“This feel good?” Karen asked

“Yeah, yeah, keep going” he retorted sharply. So she took it to the next step, taking him in hand and licking from base to tip and was rewarded by a deep moan and a visible stir from his hips. When she finally took him fully in her mouth, going as deep as she could, and God could she go deep, he let his head drop backwards, enjoying plainly her gentle treatment while still having this other woman’s face and forms at the back of his head. Gillian. He imagined how she would do it, he even wondered if she was the type to give head so easily, frankly he didn’t think so and was reassured and disappointed at the same time. Just thinking about her now made him come dangerously closer to the edge, and he hadn’t felt like this for a very long time. It was until Karen came with that very bold question

“Does your precious Gillian do that too?” An unknown feeling shot through him, all of a sudden he wanted to grab the woman in front of him and teach her some manners. He was unmistakably pissed but tried to keep it cool, putting on a wide fake smile.

“If only…You truly have no fucking idea how I’d enjoy that, but it seems I can keep dreaming a little fucking while before that happens, still got my fingers crossed, though” he smirked. But that
didn’t make Karen laugh at all, she was recently known to despise Gillian of all her heart. She raised her head to question him

“Is there a fucking problem, Karen?” he spat her name like a insult and she understood just now that she had crossed the line. She retreated on her knees, hands bonded together as if she was about to say a prayer.

“No, I’m so sorry Negan, please forgive me, I didn’t mean-“

“Get your ass off and go get cleaned up, there, you managed to fucking put me off!” He literally motioned his cock “And I don’t wanna hear that shit coming out of your mouth again, which is here for one thing only, right?” he scolded and she nodded. “Right ?!” he threw

“Yes, Negan” she lowered her head as her face was burning red with shame and put her clothes quickly back on before leaving the room.

Negan rested a few more minutes on the bed, a weird feeling enveloping him as he thought about how he has just behaved. Everything could have been fine if he had gotten angry because she had defied him, but he knew damn well it wasn’t that. The real reason that brought his anger was the way Karen had talked about Gillian, and she hadn’t even insulted her or anything, but he couldn’t see why he had reacted like that almost instantly, it resembled nothing like him. He was starting to wonder if her presence was going to be a problem. For fuck’s sakes, grow some fucking balls, man up ! He cursed himself. He couldn’t remember a time when he felt a sense a vulnerability like this. He was a man who didn’t get attached, to anyone, not necessarily because he wouldn’t but because he had sworn not to lose anything or anyone precious again. Negan stayed in bed a long time, completely naked, hands behind his head thinking about all of this and decided that a good cold shower would be perfect for now.

His whole body jolted as the first drops made contact with his bare skin, but he slowly got acquainted to it and managed to enjoy the sensation after all. That was his way of getting ready for the day when he was disturbed, it had worked every time so far. Today however, he still had something inside that was weighting, he could feel it. A little visit to Carson would do, he thought as he put his leather jacket on and arranged his hair with a comb. The appearance was very important for the leader, it was more than an image for him, it was also a way to shield himself by permanently looking sharp.

As he left his room he addressed one of his guard “Haytham, be a good boy and have those sheets cleaned up, will ya”

“Sure, boss” he nodded “Oh, and I picked up Lucille, you left it in the main hall earlier”

“I left her, Haytham, her, remember that” Negan insisted in a surprisingly cool tone and took the bat from the man’s hand “Thank you”

“Of course” Haytham said and went to call for the ‘cleaning guys’.

The door of the nursery was halfway open and Negan got a glimpse of Nigel on the hospital bed. He approached him slowly with measured steps, internally praying for the man to be alive and was relieved has he saw his chest rising up and down.

“Fucking son of a bitch made it” he mumbled in his breath. Behind him, someone was coming closer
“Couldn’t believe it myself” Negan jumped and turned around with his bat in the air in a flash to find Carson drying the catheter with a towel.

“Holy fucking shit, man!” he shouted “You creeping up on me like that!”

Carson patted him on the shoulder “Sorry, haha. He’s stabilizing, we’re making progress” he said, pointing Nigel.

Negan nodded “Did the perfusion go all right for you?” he inquired concerned, he was well aware that the doctor gave his blood more often than he should.

“Actually…” he slightly hesitated “Gillian did it” and waited patiently for Negan to get angry. But that didn’t happen. Instead he rose his eyebrows appreciatively.

Negan didn’t hide his surprise “Really?”

“Yeah, she volunteered” he continued as he found his belt on the counter and buckled it around his trousers. Negan looked at him suggestively.

“My my, doctor Carson, what have you been doin’ to our dear Nigel while he was unconscious!” he joked with a giant grin

“Shut up” Carson mumbled but he couldn’t contain his laughter. He noticed that Gillian had forgotten her belt before leaving. After all, with the important operation she probably had other stuff to think about. He picked it up and went to leave the room “I’ll be back in a sec-“

“Is that Gillian’s” Negan interrupted, pointing the object. Carson didn’t even bother to answer the question, the smile displayed on the other man’s face said it all

“Don’t say anything” he implored before Negan even had the chance to speak at all.

“Oh, you’ve been a dirty bad boy, C’” he said and extended a hand to Carson “Haha, all right that’s enough bullshit for the day, let me handle that for you. I bet she’ll be fucking delighted to see me, who knows!”

Carson gave him the belt and after giving him a friendly tap on his shoulder, Negan was marching towards Gillian’s room.

In the same room she was still sleeping. When she had left the nursery it had nearly been midday, the perfusion had taken longer then they intended. Carson feared that she might pass out on her way back so he had requested that two guards escort her to her room. A few seconds was all it took before she collapsed on her bed and slept right away. It was on the stroke of 2:30pm that someone came knocking at the door. Jumping from her sleep, the first thing she thought was ‘Where the fuck am I? What time is it?’ By the time her thoughts were gathered and clear, the person behind the door knocked harder.

She yawned…for the third time in a minute, she was still fully dressed and that was for the better. She wasn’t trusting enough to walk around in pyjamas in the Sanctuary, not with Negan repeatedly sneaking up on her. As she opened the door she wasn’t even surprised to find him standing there, Lucille on one shoulder, a wide smile across his face and…her belt?…Gillian was still a little dizzy and couldn’t quite figure how her belt managed to end up between his hands. Without her permission he stepped inside her room and she simply closed the door behind him in confusion. Her intense glare at the object didn’t escape him and he was in a playful mood.

“Got something to tell me, Sweetheart?” he asked

She frowned “Wh-what do you mean?”
“I just got this back from Carson’s…you probably forgot it after you two were…you know’’ he inquired. Meanwhile Gillian was more lost than ever

“After wh-’’

“You say no to me, understandable ‘cause of me being such an ass with you all the time’’ he cut her “But say no to Carson? I mean the man is cute as a fucking peach, I’d definitely fuck him if I was that way, but that’s not the point.’’ He cleared his throat “C’mon what’s your secret, huh? You got a man back home?’’ He really hoped that wasn’t the case. She shook her head no “Is it Rick?’’ Negan teased

“No’’ she firmly said

“So what, a…fuckfriend?’’ She was about to say something but backed down, which made Negan’s face light up

“Oh my, so it is a fuckfriend!’’ he triumphed “Does he got a name?’’ he acted like it didn’t matter to him but in truth he really wanted to know because there was clearly a hint of jealousy slowly growing inside of him now

“Oh, I’m certainly not going to tell you’’ she assured

He rose his eyebrows “Really, Gil?’’ he sounded more than disappointed

She cleared her throat and decided to change the subject “Is this what you came for?’’

“No exactly’’ he admitted “Your belt first’’ she thanked him as he handed it over to her

“Second, do you feel good enough for the run? Because we don’t take any dead weights’’ he warned

Her eyebrows popped up “What changed your mind?’’ She was truly surprised, she remembered that he wasn’t exactly enthusiastic with the idea of her participation to the run.

“What happened this morning…anyone’s life means a great deal to me’’ What he was going to say to her wasn’t something he usually did with being completely honest. Actually he himself couldn’t remember the last time he said those very words to someone and actually meant it “I… want to-just…thank you, Gillian, sincerely for what you did out there’’ it was easier than he would have thought but perhaps it was only because it was her.

“You are very welcome’’ she watched him, concerned, he seemed all fucked up “Are you alright?’’ she asked

He rose his eyebrows “What, me? I’m fucking kickin’!’’ he said with insurance. Deep down he knew very damn well that something wasn’t right. He was afraid because he realized how much of a grip this woman had on him without even trying. How much her actions had an impact on his person. He wasn’t treating her particularly fairly yet she managed to keep her head up and do the job he asked, even a little bit more. He had even had some words from his men telling him she was always there to help whenever the needed, no matter the time. He was tangled between keeping up with his behavior and getting rougher until she was completely broken, this was what he would usually do, and what he should do. And this other part of him that wanted to treat her right, as she deserved. This option could reveal itself to be extremely dangerous for his person and statue. But in a way it seemed impossible to do anything wrong or mean to that woman who was so calm, so understanding before the atrocities she witnessed, after the way she had been taken from her people. There was a sort of constant peace that surrounded her, Negan thought, a peace he hadn’t managed to protect himself with. She was one of a kind.
He suspected that she was hard as a damn rock underneath that smooth feminine form, both from body and mind. This was also one of the reasons he wanted her on the run this afternoon, he was curious to see how sturdy she really was. The incident of the morning had been quite revealing already.

Negan turned his attention back to Gillian “So, you coming?...so to speak” he winked and she rolled her eyes at the back of her head.

“Of course I am, I asked for it, remember?” and he nodded.

“By the way, you should have told me that you wanted to chain up the walkers instead of the field job. Even if apparently you’re clearly over qualified” he took a good look at her, she seemed exhausted and he wondered if it was really reasonable to let her go like this “It got pretty rough back there, are you sure you’re up for this? It’s cool if you aren’t, really” he assured her. And then she gave him a death glare that could have killed a damn walker. “OK, got it” he surrendered “We all meet at 3:45 for the weapon check”. Then he left the room with a wave of his hand “I’ll see you later”.

Gillian sat back on her bed, reflecting on why a group like the Saviors needed to go on runs as they had entire communities around at their service. Maybe there had been a problem with one of them, she thought, or maybe they were short on supplies, they were an enormous community after all…no, it wasn’t possible, not after the amount of food she had seen the other day.

Has she wiggled her way in her sheets, preparing herself for another nap, she realized she had forgotten to ask Negan when he and his crew will be leaving for Alexandria, her main goal was still to be able to participate to that little trip but as she knew, it wasn’t thing done.

During that time in the main hall
“So she’s coming, right?” Simon asked his leader

“Yeah, she is…I probably should’ve said no now that I think about it” he ran his hand through his beard in a deep concentration with himself.

“You’ve seen what she’s done this morning, she can only bring something good to the squad, she’s a very good asset if you ask me” Simon said with confidence. He, like everybody else, had been surprised and fairly impressed with her performance. He knew a skilled individual when he saw one, and Gillian was by all means a skilled individual. Therefore Negan had no real reason not to believe and trust his right hand man, but there was this other problem concerning that woman, he feared that she might become more than an asset to him and that, very quickly.

He shook these ideas out of his head to focus on the task at hand “So, how many men, boss?” Simon asked

Negan reflected a moment “Clayton, Arat, Haytham, Tom, yourself and I, of course”

Simon eyed him silently “And Gillian” he added

“That’s what I said…” his words weren’t exactly said in a confident way, Simon noticed

“Nope” he teased “But that’s not a problem! That makes us seven…the night will be falling in no time, maybe it would be wise to add a couple more, what do you think?” Simon was a very serious guy when it came to his job, he knew what he had to do to please his boss and like him, he wanted to keep the Sanctuary’s people alive. He was a respected member of the crew, giving orders was never a problem for him, he also had an intimidating presence that really made you understand that behaving was the best option available. Night runs turned out to be particularly
dangerous in the past, he didn’t want to mess this one up and the best choice was always to take as many people as possible.

“Yeah, add Jason to the list, he’ll do” the leader said. “3:45 for the weapon check, get three cars ready and fueled, don’t want any fuck ups today.”

“You got it” Simon confirmed and started to call out for some help with the car filling.

Negan slowly walked out of the hall with heavy thoughts still hanging inside. The sun was bright this afternoon and the heat could easily be felt when outside. He hummed the air and left the cool wind fly through his hair and against his face. It felt good to face nature sometimes and not let other groups take care of it because everything wasn’t so bad about this world, he found. Things were almost perfect for him now but there was one thing, one thing missing, for a long time now, too long. As the wind came crashing on his person with more force, Negan hoped it would wash away the little disturbances that were hidden under his skin.
I cannot tell you how sorry I am to make you wait that long for just one chapter. I have some exams very soon and I wasn’t very inspired lately because of it. Hope you’ll like this one. I’d like to welcome and thank the new followers of the story, honestly this means a lot ! I really hope the next chapter will be posted in a shorter amount of time :) Kudos and comments are welcome as usual !

The engines started to roar at the gates of the Sanctuary, Negan’s men checked everything, tires, fuel, the lights…Meanwhile in the armory, the chosen ones for the run picked their weapons of choice and it wasn’t really complicated: assault rifles and guns. That is all they would be needing. Arat and Gillian entered the room as the guys walked out, they greeted each other with warm ‘hellos’. It was just a word but it was enough for Gillian to smile. Contact and connections, however they may be, that was what the world needed to keep it together at times such as this. Talking, sharing to make sure not to drown in madness and despair, to keep going, raise you head and tell yourself ‘I’m alive, I’m here’. Arat’s curiosity rose as she saw her partner’s mouth twitch “Well, well, what’s it with you today, pretty ? You really wanna kick some walker ass, don’t you? ” She questioned her. Gillian started to wonder if people here were spies or something, they always saw everything, wether it was a blink of the eye, shaky hands, or the smallest of frowns. She scratched her head, feeling a little ridiculous just smiling like that “No, I’m not particularly excited to kill walkers, I’ve heard they’re already dead anyway” she winked “Ha haaa, you’re a smart one you !” Arat laughed grabbing Gillian by the arm in a gentle way “C’mon let’s get you ready. Negan’s been pretty clear about you, so I’m afraid a gun is all that I can offer you for tonight” she said in a sorry tone.

“’That’s fine, trust me it’ll do’” Gillian told her. After all with a good aim one bullet was all that was needed to end a walker. Not to mention the number of bullets that you could save using just a gun. Gillian wasn’t worried about that, hitting the bull’s eye had never been a problem for her, and tonight was certainly not the time to complain about her condition. Arat gave her two more magazines, fully loaded to make sure she wouldn’t lack bullets. She grabbed her AR-15, it was her favorite: simple use and deadly, couldn’t ask for more! Gillian inspected the gun a little closely and she noticed a familiar symbol carved in the grip. Three distinct scratches, feline like, right in the middle of it. That was Daryl’s work she triumphed internally! That was it, they must have taken it from them the other night, or even before, she remembered that Daryl, Glenn and Michonne had spent a little more time with the Saviors.

She was about to ask Arat about but all things considered she thought it might be better not to dwell on those arduous memories. It was neither the time nor place to get the minds boiling over those events, they were through and a deal had been made, her deal.

It was the second time now that she thought of her friends, and it was painful. The idea of getting back to them, only thinking of it, brought her happiness and managed to prevent her from snapping. Gillian was as composed as they came, but a place like the Sanctuary in a world such as this one could lead any person to fall on the other side. The side that pushed one to its boundaries, to commit the worst atrocities the world has to offer for the sake of power. Most of the Saviors were not bad people, at least they weren’t back in the days. Like everyone they must have had a
family, a job, a nice house to live into with neighbors to have barbecues with on weekends maybe. But a community that powerful could only raise greedy people, no matter what they were before. Greedy and complete turds also, especially some of the men residing in the Sanctuary. God, she couldn’t remember having seen such self-centered and arrogant people in a very long time. They couldn’t even respect each other inside the Sanctuary’s walls so imagine if they faced foreigners…

No, she decided, nothing, no one will ever change her in one of those brainless sbires that would blindly follow any leader. She will not allow that, life be damned, if that was the price to pay to keep her freedom she would pay it.

When the time comes, Gillian will return this gun to Daryl, one way or another. She didn’t know when or how but that was settled in her mind. She stuffed her gun and ammos in a holster, one freshly picked up by Arat and gave her an ‘I’m ready glare’. Arat nodded and offered her a determined ‘let’s fucking do this’. It was as if they were going to war, and in a sense they were. Walkers were not the only threat out there, everyone knew that only too well. Except if there was a herd coming by, there was most likely no worries to have when it came to walkers. Roaming humans on the contrary were unpredictable, and extremely deadly when confronted to a possible threat. As the saying goes man is a wolf to man.

Arat and Gillian joined the rest of the crew who was now gathered around the cars, the boys were talking strategic points and red zones to avoid on the way and at the spot were they were supposed to get the supplies. Negan had zipped his leather jacket all the way up and arranged his red scarf tightly around his neck. This evening was announced to be rather cold, Gillian could see smoke coming out of his mouth as he spoke to his men. He seemed in control as always, actually the sky might be falling on his head, he would still manage to keep that face that clearly implied ‘everything is under control’. But in his eyes and the way he spoke like he had a train to catch, she discerned something close to…fear ? Was it really fear that she could see in Negan’s eyes at this very moment ? Had it been so long since he had scavenged in the night to find his own stuff that he was terrified at the idea of leaving the safety of his gates just now ? No it couldn’t be that, she decided but she really wanted to find out. As she approached him she rubbed her arms, even with her heavy military vest she could feel her body shiver a little under the freezing air.

Negan dismissed his men as he saw her walking towards him, usually only one of his hands was granted the honor of wearing the glove but tonight both his hands were covered with leather gloves.

‘Cold night ahead, huh ?’ she said as she brought her collar up to prevent the cold wind from ‘caressing’ the back of her neck. That was one thing she couldn’t stand.

Negan nodded like if he had heard the secrets among secrets ‘Oh yeah, you know the wind’s a fucking bitch’ he started, ready to spill a long monologue on the god damn wind ‘You never can see it or grab it yet it can just come along and slap your fucking face, just like that ! For fun you know. God damn fucking fickity windy bastard. I swear if there was one fucking way to-’’ he stopped short as he saw the look on Gillian’s face. She was on the edge of bursting out laughing, he could tell, he drew back and smiled too ‘‘What ?’’ he asked in his deepest southern accent.

She cleared her throat ‘‘Nothing, it’s just…were we really having an almost philosophic discussion about the wind ?’’ she laughed.

‘‘Oh, come on now, are you laughing on me ? Yay, that’s it, Sweetheart’’ he pulled out his best beaten dog face and tilted his head to the side ‘‘That’s very rude, Gillian’’ he pronounced her given name in such a deep voice that she hardly recognized it. But damn if she didn’t like the sound of it ! She needed to change the subject now not to be distracted.

‘‘So hum,…about the run, how does it work here ? What’s the spot ? And the supplies we-’’

‘‘Wowow, let us calm our tits here, darlin’ ’’ always a way with words, she thought ‘‘If I recall
you’re a prisoner, and I don’t think I’m even allowed to share that kind of intel with a con’’ he said playfully and Gillian rose her eyebrows

‘‘Oh, so I’m a convict, is that it ?’’ If she wanted to appear serious, that wasn’t what Negan saw, his eyes were shining with malice and he was ready to joke again. The only thing was that she was really serious now. She had to admit that she was a little nervous today and some piece of information would be very welcome. ‘‘Can’t you tell me anything ?’’ she asked almost in despair. Negan took in her worried look and thought better than leave her helpless like this.

‘‘The place is a bit farther than we thought, I recon it’ll take us at least a good forty minutes to just get there.’’ Gillian swallowed a large gulp of saliva, the god damn places was miles away, it had been a very long time since she had even gotten in a car. ‘‘It’s a huge basement we’re talking about, three stories, that means it’s potentially full of roamers so we’ll have to mind each fucking step we take’’ he continued ‘‘These fucks aren’t exactly easy to spot when the night is out’’.

If it worried him, he clearly didn’t show it, as he tied his giant dagger to his thigh and announced to his men that it was time to go. Gillian had her knuckles clenched in solid fists, if she was about to gain Negan’s trust and prove something to him it was now. She told herself that if she succeeded this afternoon maybe, just maybe, he would let her some space and freedom and might even bring her to Alexandria when they would go. She could hold on to that for now, it permitted her to think forward and straight.

She opened the right door of the truck but waited when she saw Negan walk back to her. He placed his elbow on the door and bent abruptly towards his girl, trapping her between the truck and his imposing figure.

‘‘You try anything, and I mean anything, I’ll have my guys put a god damn leach on you and walk you around this place. Understood ?’’

Well, that was unexpected, she thought. It couldn’t be clearer though, when he spoke, you listened and when he ordered, you simply executed, she had to give him that.

‘‘Oh, yeah, I understand’’ she smirked, thinking of how ridiculous what he implied would be. Negan couldn’t contain his smile either as he knew exactly what she was thinking. It was all a game, a role, and Gillian only started to understand that. The best option was to play along but unexpectedly she didn’t find it too difficult.

Nonchalantly, she broke the painful eye-contact and wiggled her way to the passenger’s seat.

‘‘You try anything, and I mean anything, I’ll have my guys put a god damn leach on you and walk you around this place. Understood ?’’

‘‘Ready ?’’ she addressed Gillian, and she nodded

‘‘Ready !’’

The trucks got in line and went east as the sun slowly continued to go down. The ride was going to last a little while so Arat proposed Gillian to take a little nap which she gladly accepted.

40 minutes later

‘‘Wakey, wakey, Gill’. We’re here’’ Arat tapped Gillian’s shoulder and she jumped instantly

‘‘Damn, how do you sleep so well in a car, girl ?’’ She asked. Gillian yawned and rubbed her eyes in a hurry

‘‘Just tired is all’’ she admitted

Arat rose her eyebrows ‘‘Better not be sleepy now’’ she warned her nicely. She parked along with two other trucks and grabbed her rifle that rested on the backseats.

Negan, his precious Lucille on his shoulder, got out of his vehicle and gave a few informations to
his men. And then it was time to go.

Tom, Haytham and Jason were the first to go, Gillian’s breath trembled a little as she saw them disappear in the darkness of the basement, their torches lit up few seconds later.

“Got the safety off, Sweetheart?” Negan teased and it took Gillian a few seconds to realize he was talking to her

“Very funny” she said sarcastically

“All right, you’ll go after us with Clayton and stay on the upper part of the basement. Get your walky talky on folks.”

The two concerned protagonists nodded and waited for them to step in the building before following shortly.

Once inside there was no sound, except for the echo of each step they took. Clayton led the way, he was incredibly tall and stout, she even suspected he had been military before.

She wanted to start a casual conversation to ease the atmosphere, but he saved her the trouble “You don’t seem scared, lady, you do this often?” he asked still very focused on what was going on before him.

“Yeah, I used to. It wasn’t a choice in the beginning, after it almost became a national sport” she admitted and he laughed. “Sorry, to ask but, were you in the army or something?” she tried

“Haha, no. I get this a lot but no, I was a teacher” he added “…who loved going to the gym !”

The both of them giggled but were shortly interrupted by the sound of a broken glass.

“Coming from the left, right there” she automatically stated like a machine.

Clayton followed her lead as she passed before him, gun at the ready. Anything could have broken that glass or whatever that was. The floor was filled with pieces of concrete which indicated that the building was quite old, probably conducive to collapse in a very near futur. Gillian grabbed a few rocks, if there was a walker nearby, she should be able to get his attention with it. The bait didn’t disappoint. As soon as the little pebble hit the ground, an unmistakable grunt rose from the corridor that went to the left. Without a word, Clayton slipped his knife to Gillian from behind and followed her closely as she got closer to the sound. It was indeed stupid to waste bullets and make noise for just one walker, they assumed he was alone…

Thankfully he was and Gillian easily put him out of his misery with a swift stab in the back of the head, like she knew.

“Nice job” her partner granted her “Keep the knife, I have another”.

Gillian thanked him and suggested that they split as the other corridor they came from continued straight ahead. Clayton apologized saying that Negan had ordered him to stay with her under any circumstance. To protect her or keep an eye on her, she wasn’t sure, but in either way it was a wise decision all things considered, who knows what rested in the dark corners of this place.

Tom, Haytham and Jason had been the lucky ones this time, although they were in the lowest part of the basement, that was were the jackpot was. Guns, ammos, guns, rifles and even more guns had been stored in the facility. The three of them inspected the shipment and they totally liked what they saw, this will for sure please their adored leader.

On the other hand Negan, Arat and Simon had chosen a rather damaged story. They had walked past a corridor where a few walkers were roaming around as they should but they ignored it as there was another path. Water was pouring on them as the pipes had literally exploded under the pressure, they weren’t dripping when but not so far from that and the water covered a good part of their feet. Simon had been complaining about it since they entered the place and the two others
never missed an occasion to politely ask him to “shut the fuck up”.
If Simon was a full time joker, he knew when to start acting seriously and as he saw a bunch of
electric wires dangerously close to the water, he stopped dead in his tracks.
“Boss ?” he knew he had seen it too and waited for his orders.

“I don’t know, they’re surely out of order if you ask me. I mean the place is falling apart, it would
be very unlikely for the electricity to be running by now.” He ran his gloved hand to his beard,
one could never be too careful but he was really confident about these wires, they wouldn’t cause
any trouble “Let’s keep going” he said.

They turned right as this was the only way the corridor offered and Simon almost cursed out loud
has he discovered in horror what had been sitting just a few feet away from them.
Dozens of walkers, probably a hundred were confined in the long alley. It looked like they were
all asleep but the sight was nonetheless worrisome.
Arat slowly oriented her light in the opposite way not draw attention and whispered as low as she
could “I think we should turn back” A welcome suggestion at the moment, to which Negan was
about to say yes until Simon saw what was written above the door on the opposite side of the
corridor.

“Are you guys nuts ? There’s a canteen over to that corner, it’s probably full, we can’t just walk
away from it” he said with confidence. Baldness was also a strong feature of Simon, it usually
pleased Negan, but now was not the time to be a hero.

“And how do you suggest we do that, huh ?” Arat asked

“We can draw them back, lead them to another side while someone gets to that fucking canteen”
he proposed

“There are walkers from our side two, Simon, there’s no way to do that without ending up in a
fucking sandwich” Negan told his right hand man eagerly

“But they’re not numerous, if we-”

“Simon! “ Negan whispered harshly “We go back, now”. There was no place for an argument.

Very carefully, they stepped back, trying to make their way through the water quietly.
In situations like this, each little step felt like it was very noisy, but they progressed well…When
suddenly…
Bzzz…Bzzzz “Negan, it’s Tom, I’m with Haytham and Jason, we’re clear and we’ve found the
booty ! You’re gonna love it !” The voice in the walky talky echoed loudly in the corridor and
they didn’t even need to look up to understand that there was now a hundred faces fixed on them.
Arat’s breath caught “We have to move”…
A/N: Hey readers, again I'm really really sorry for that impossibly long delay, I don't even have a good excuse ! I guess I just had a hard time getting back to writing after my exams (which I passed !). Anyway, thank you for your patience if you are still here :) I've got three new chapters for you this week, hope you'll enjoy them !

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Get a fucking move on !” Negan barked as he brought his walkie talkie up “Tom, get your fucking asses to our position, we’re in trouble !”

Bzz…Bzz “We’ll be right there. What do you want us to do with the package ?”

Negan cursed under his breath, he had frankly other things to think about at the moment “For fuck’s sake, you said the area was clear, let Jason and Haytham take care of that and get the fuck over here !” he spat

“Yes, sir, we’re on our way”.

During that time, Arat and Simon had managed to put a few of the walkers down but it didn’t do much to slow down the large herd that was following them and the ammos diminished quickly. Suddenly, Arat remembered a little detail and started to panic

“Negan, the walkers from the other corridor, they must’ve heard all of this. They’re gonna be on us in a few-”

“Yes, Arat, I’m very aware of that” he cut her irritated “We just have to pray the boys will be there on fucking time”.

“Fucking shit” Negan growled harshly as he had just the time to stab a roamer that came very close to bite him. They could hold them back for a while but in the end they would very probably be overtaken by the number of them and they had to maintain them here so the others could escape the building safely. Walkers were coming from everywhere, they were all over the place and it seemed that no matter the effort they all put to fight them they were still has numerous as in the beginning.

“Get your heads down! Get your fucking heads down !” Tom screamed has he arrived panting in the crowded corridor. They instantly did what he said as he was clearly going to try to shoot as many walkers as possible from his position. He didn’t disappoint. The bullets flew by numbers and illuminated the dark path with a blinding light show. The sound was deafening for they were in a very restricted area.

“I’m reloading” they heard him shout, and then it was their turn to get the work done.

“D’you see Haytham and Gillian on your way here ?” Negan managed out of breath.

“No, there was just me, Haytham and Jason got the package out just like you asked. Did you try the radio ?” Tom asked

“Yeah, couldn’t reach ’em” Negan was very aware that he worried about Gillian more than he
should. Not that he didn’t care about the rest of the crew, on the contrary, he did care more than people thought. But at this very moment only a young woman was on his mind.

“Let’s hope they heard the damn shots then” Tom said as he finished reloading his rifle and started shooting again.

The scene was a butchery, the walls were covered in brain bits, it was hard to make where the floor truly started, the dead bodies covering others endlessly. Yet the little group almost paid no attention to it, the will to survive too present to be distracted.

“Man, it’s good you took care of the walkers from this side, good job, kid” Negan had the time to greet him “How many were they?”

Tom frowned “What?” It was hard to hear with all the fuss

“The walkers from where you came” Negan shouted louder “How many were they?” This time Tom fully understood but he still looked surprised by the question

“What walkers? The road was clear- Haaaa!” A harsh scream of pain escaped the young man’s throat which had just been torn apart by a walker. Negan had just the time to turn around to see Tom look at him with terror, his shaking hand towards him as to beg him to do something, anything that could have helped him. But there was nothing that could be done, they both knew it and while Tom would soon have nothing to worry about anymore, Negan and his little crew weren’t exactly out of trouble yet. They were completely surrounded now, saying that they were in a bucket of shit was an understatement.

A long knife suddenly emerged from the walker’s eye and Clayton’s head popped out from the dark with Gillian closely following in case there were any other lonely roamers in the path.

“Our radio was out but we heard the shots” Clayton panted as he stabbed another one in a rather graceful move. He was very good at his job. “The road is clear, we just have to go now!” Negan nodded and called out to Arat and Simon who had literally slaughtered at least forty walkers but there were more coming and killing them all would be a waste of bullets. They got in line behind each other and started progressing to where they came from.

As they were all heading for the main entrance, Gillian picked up Tom as well as she could, his head was still slightly attached to his neck but was dangerously threatening to fall apart. Tom was a well built guy but he happened to be very small so she didn’t have any problem to shove him up her shoulder, military style, as she was quite muscular herself. Negan gave her an appreciative nod and gestured for her to precede him.

As he stood behind her, Tom’s eyes seemed to be fixed on him, empty yet focused directly at him as if he was reproaching him something. Negan tried to concentrate on what was going on around him rather than look at his fallen soldier. It was always hard for him to get over these losses, plus, Tom was one of his best, he had been by his side for a long time and God, he was so young, so fucking young to die like this and now. As he always did, he swallowed his rage and marched on with the rest of the crew.

Soon they reached the light of day, more like the moonlight actually, they had stayed a little longer than expected in this damn building. Jason and Haytham ran towards them, like everyone they had heard the shots and screams and were hoping everyone was safe and unharmed. Although Jason’s throat tied as he saw Gillian carrying a limp body over her shoulder.

“Shit” he muttered as he approached them “Is that Tom?” he asked “Is he alright?” His eyes
ran to his partner's faces in turn, they weren’t announcing any good news. Without a word, Simon walked towards him and laid a strong hand on his upper arm

“We lost a good fella tonight, kid” Jason rose his head to him, there was no sign of pleasantries in Simon’s eyes.

“God dammit” he shook his head in disbelief.

Clayton helped Gillian lay the body on the ground properly. He hadn’t turned yet but they had to stay alert just in case, it could happen at any moment now. In the same time, Negan and Arat made sure to barricade the main door. Walkers may be slow but they would show up soon enough, they always did.

They all gathered around the body quietly, contemplating their failure and playing the scenario on repeat in their heads to figure out what could have been done differently to avoid this kind of tragedy. Negan reached down his leg to take out his knife and kneeled above Tom’s head. His eyes were still on him but the green of his irises were impossibly clear now, like if they had been covered with a veil. The poison was taking effect and soon, the man would become the enemy. It was out of the question for Negan to let the change operate. He gently laid his free hand on his face to close his eyes and mumbled a few words the others couldn’t hear before sliding the blade through his skull and brain. He stayed by the man’s side a few moments completely silent, simply towering above him, ignoring the freezing air that came slapping across his face. He then got up and asked his men to load Tom’s body at the back of the truck, strictly specifying that it was to be made carefully.

As they did so, Simon approached his boss and friend

“Hard to watch him go, huh?” he said, observing the body as it was transported

“Yeah…He was just a kid” Negan deplored while cleaning his knife with a dirty piece of cloth

“Not even 22 if I remember correctly” Simon added shaking his head “A shame”

“You said it” Negan cleared his throat, composing himself “We’ll make sure people can pay their respects and you’ll see to a proper burial among the others”

“Of course” and then he joined the rest of the group who was attending the task of stocking the freshly found weapons in the cars, there was a lot of those.

In the corner, just under a tree, Jason was sitting quietly, his chin resting on his bent knees and some tears were threatening to slip from his eyes. He had lost a very good friend tonight and the emotion was hard to contain. He wiped his face as he saw his leader walking towards him

“Let it spill, kid” he said to him “Otherwise, one day you’ll be submerged by all this shit, it’ll eat you the fuck up.” He ran his eyes around, looking at what stood here and there, not really seeing

“Yeah, it’ll swallow you whole and drag you down with it” he continued, kicking a few stones with his foot “You’ll go see Carson when we arrive” Negan advised him

“I’ll be fin-” Jason started before being sharply interrupted

“No arguing” the other grunted, looking down at him and he could only nod.

Gillian, as she helped gathering the material, watched the encounter between the two of them from the corner of her eye and it seemed Negan had managed to appease the boy. She continued watching as he laid a gentle hand on Jason’s shoulder and finally helped him get up to join back the squad.

After a while, everything was packed up and they were ready to go back. The doors slammed one
by one, the engines roared and the vehicles began their journey back to the Sanctuary.

During the trip, Arat and Gillian didn’t talk much, a few glances were exchanged but nothing more. One could only feel the heavy atmosphere since the incident took place. It was in the air, so thick that one could almost grasp it if he wanted to. It surprised Gillian to witness this sense of brotherhood among the Saviors. They cared about their own in a way she would have never suspected, as if they were strongly bound with a pact involving trust, loyalty, always. It was interesting to see that even with the previous world gone, some habits died hard. The concept of clans, little empires ruled by kings, and their subjects here to make the place work and thrive. Alexandria, the Sanctuary, they were both little kingdoms in their own ways, Gillian thought. A few months back, by the time she was still scavenging alone, it seemed impossible for her to believe there would ever be anything close to civilisation again. She remembered being suspicious of everything, everyone who crossed her path, denying more than once the need for help from other people. When they took her in in Alexandria, when she first stepped foot inside their walls, it was like a big slap across the face. They weren’t surviving, they were living. And now that she had discovered the Sanctuary, she could only assume that there had to be other communities around, maybe some bigger ones even. After all, since it all started, she had only crossed ten percent of the country, if not less, so there was plenty of space for others to settle. The Sanctuary and Alexandria were not alike in many ways, Gillian knew that, but they weren’t so different either. Negan was a ruthless leader, a dangerous one, there was no arguing on that, but he cared for his people, tonight’s accident had been oh so revealing of that. On the other side, Rick also wanted the best for his own, and she knew he could also show himself ruthless to protect them. The only difference was that for the Saviors, it was them and nobody else. The rest was just here to feed them and provide with whatever they would ask. That was a nasty pill to swallow for her, and she wasn’t okay with it yet, most likely never will be.

In their car, Negan and Simon had been more talkative than the others, for Haytham and Clayton didn’t dare say a word to Jason. Negan remembered the canteen Simon had seen in the deadly corridor, it was too interesting to be left untouched, but of course they weren’t gonna have a go at it too soon, not after what happened.

Simon quickly came with a simple but obvious solution to explore this part of the building without risking anyone’s life. He proposed to draw all the walkers out with some loud noises so that the place would be left empty. The most of them were already at the door, they had followed them in their escape. After that, they would just need to eliminate the remaining ones, if there were any, and take whatever was left to be taken in that canteen.

Only a few lights were still shining when they reached the Sanctuary, at the gates, a total of three guards were here to greet them. As they parked, more men arrived to help them empty the cars and the horrified looks and whimpers didn’t take long to emerge as they all discovered the mutilated body. Negan, seeing they were somewhat waiting for an explanation, told them he would make an announcement first thing in the morning before dismissing them. As Tom’s remains were the only thing left to take out, Jason asked Negan if he could take care of his friend but the latter flatly refused

“‘You’ he pressed one finger onto his chest ‘need to go see Carson, you need to talk about this’”

“Please, I need to do th-“

“Do I need to remind you your place, young man?” Negan said menacingly. He was not really upset with him, it was mostly the exhaustion talking. All he wanted now was to crawl on his bed, the day had been tiresome to say the least.

Jason swallowed his words and apologized to his leader

“‘Now, now, it’s all forgotten, kid’ he patted his back, then motioned for Gillian to approach. He slightly bent towards her to speak in her ear ‘Would you terribly mind bringing Jason to our dear doctor? I would have done it in normal time but’ he searched for the words ‘I’m just fucking
dead !’” he admitted

“Of course’’ she answered almost instantly, which surprised him and made him exhale in relief at
the same time.

“I really appreciate that’’ she just nodded “Go get some sleep after, you earned it. That was some
good job back there’’ he added, truly meaning it

“Not good enough apparently’’ she realized she had just spoken out loud when he answered

“Well, we can’t save everyone now, can we’’ he said, stepping back towards the door to the
endless corridors to his quarters before addressing the rest of the group “‘Take care of him, boys’’
he motioned Tom’s body ‘‘and girl’’ he winked in Arat’s direction ‘‘Then you're off to sleep’’
And then he disappeared with Simon on his heels.

“Come on’’ Gillian said to Jason as they took the direction to the medical wing. She wanted to
say a lot of things as they walked but didn’t know where to start so she didn’t say anything at all.
Also, she didn’t want to sound patronizing with some dull grieving advices. There was no good or
bad way for that, it took time, more for some than others.

“I can go on from there if you want’’ he suddenly broke the silence ‘‘I don’t wanna keep you up
anymore than you want to’’ he shyly offered. The boy was truly broken, she thought. You could
feel it his in voice, see it in his eyes.

“Oh, I’m fine, don’t you worry about me’’ she replied “Besides, there is worst than being around
you, trust me’’. There was the slightest curve on his lips, which was enough for Gillian to triumph
“Theres is a smile !’’ she chuckled and he blushed a little “I’d say it’s a start’’.
They talked more after that, up until they arrived at Carson’s door. Gillian knocked and after a few
seconds, he greeted them on the threshold. At first he was surprised to see Jason and Gillian
together at this hour, he would have thought the run would be over a few hours ago. Then Gillian
told him that there had been a terrible accident, hence the night visit, though she didn’t explain the
all story.
“I think it would be better if he tells you’’ she said discreetly as she watched Jason who was now
sitting in one of the chairs inside the room, a glass of water in his hand. Carson frowned, starting
to imagine the worst.
“Are you alright, Gillian ? You sure you don’t want to come in ? You look exhausted’’ he said
with concern. He knew Negan could ask some pretty crazy stuff from those who worked for him

“Is it that obvious ?’’ she asked and he laughed

“Well, I can tell from those two big bags under you eyes !’’

“You are a cock ! And yes I’m alright’’ she reassured him. She seemed alright, he could see that,
though he could not say the same about Jason. When he had walked into the room he seemed
absent, like he was there physically but somewhere else mentally. Carson saw that too often
nowadays, especially with the younger ones, it saddened him deeply.
“I better be going, it’s getting late’’ Gillian said before yawning

“Clearly’’ he had a gigantic devilish smile on his face and she greeted her teeth, regretting her last
action

“You have a good night, Carson’’ she said stepping out the doorstep

“You too, Gillian, you too’’ he smiled and closed the door.

It was nearly one in the morning when she finally put herself to bed for a well deserved sleep. In a
matter on seconds, her eyes closed and she was gone for the night.

Negan on the other hand, as tired as he was, had been chatting with Simon over a scotch in his quarters. They talked about his plan to reach the canteen of the basement and elaborated it a little more deeply. And after a while for some reasons Gillian’s name came up, which made Negan think of something.

‘‘Where is your mind off to again, huh ? What are you thinkin’ ?’’ Simon asked. Negan, as he usually did while speculating, ran a hand through his beard

‘‘…I’m thinking…It’s time we pay Rick a little visit’’ he said as he downed his scotch.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: There you go for number seven, the next chapter should appear in a few minutes, just the time for me to see if I made any mistakes, and chapter nine will likely be posted tomorrow. Let me know what you think :)}
Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

A/N: Here we go for chapter eight, it's a little longer than the previous ones. This time we look a little into Gillian's past...Hope you'll enjoy this one :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

When she woke up the sun was already up and making its way between the curtains of her room right to her face. She looked up at the clock, it indicated ten past ten. Gillian cursed and got up quickly, not even bothering opening the curtains fully and making her way to the bathroom for the quick shower she didn’t have the energy to take yesterday evening. It wasn’t that late but she didn’t like to show up at breakfast when everyone was already seated. As she undressed she got a glimpse of herself in the large mirror and stared at her right shoulder. There was blood, Tom’s blood. She could still hear the screams. It had been a long time since she had witnessed an accident, thinking back she realized that the run had been poorly prepared. They should have brought more people along with them, and most of all, they shouldn’t have waited for the night to fall. Then maybe, just maybe they could have prevented this from happening.

She shook all the memories from her head and entered the shower turning the tap all the way to the right, all cold. She regretted shortly after, realizing that because the sun was in sight didn’t mean the air was hot as well. She dried herself as fast as possible with the fluffiest towel she could find.

"Ow shit!" she muttered, noticing the fresh blood on the towel "Oh no no no, not now for fuck’s sake!" it was that time of the month and she hadn’t anything planned for it. She grabbed some toilet paper to clean herself, still cursing all sorts of words, and put some in her underwear for she didn’t have anything else to use.

At breakfast she sat at her ordinary table with Arat, as she had thought, practically all of the Sanctuary was already there. Yesterday’s events were on everyone’s mouths, most of the people still wondered what had really happened last night and some stories were already circulating among them. When Negan appeared on the passerelle above, well decided to shut all rumors down, the room suddenly became very quiet, all the faces looking up to the leader. He was standing tall and looked even more impressive hovering over them like that. Simon was by his side, as always, repeatedly nodding to what his chief might say, though he didn’t seem too affected by Tom’s death. He had come to a point where nothing, or very few things, could shock him. And boy, had he seen a few things! Also the man relied on alcohol much to forget about all the horrors, the deaths, the fear, because there was still fear. No matter how the Saviors presented at first sight, the fear was always here and last night she had made a unexpected apparition they would all remember for a long time. A simple reminder that nobody was safe, not even the mighty Saviors.

Negan’s speech was short, very formal and went to the essential, not trying to hide anything and not giving to much away either. His people didn’t need the details. He praised Tom’s spirit, said that he would be sorely missed and explained that his tomb was now finished and that whoever wanted could go see him and lay tributes on the grave. He concluded his speech by reminding everyone how much their lives mattered, then told them to enjoy the rest of the breakfast and left the room rather quickly. The room was then rapidly filled with passionate conversations over the given speech.
Arat, as she was very much enjoying her scrambled eggs, was watching Gillian, her on the other hand hadn’t touched her plate.

“You’re not eating?” she questioned her

“Not hungry” she motioned her lap “Periods.” A silent ‘O’ formed on Arat’s lips

“I feel you, girl, gosh sometime’s I wish there was an on and off button! But what you’re gonna do, mother nature’s a bitch” she spat, taking a sip of her coffee.

“Does the infirmary have some pads, tampons or anything like that by any chance?” Gillian asked while discreetly crossing her fingers under the table. Arat, seeing that she was anxious, took her sweet time to finally give her an answer

“Yes! It does” she snickered

“That.is.not funny!” Gillian said through greeted teeth “I’m going, okay? I’ll see you in a bit.” She got up and started to walk away from the table when Arat shouted at her

“Off you go bloody Mary!” Gillian shot her a death glare and Arat just couldn’t stop laughing.

While the rest of the Sanctuary was still having breakfast, in the little court yard, where the motorcycles were parked, Negan had gathered a large group of men and women, at least twenty, all fighters and gunmen, and was discussing his plan to visit Alexandria in a few days. He thought for a bit and came to the conclusion that he might add ten more people just in case. He knew the place, Alexandria, having been around a few times, that was a big spot but he didn’t know exactly how many people lived there. More precisely how many good fighters were there. He wasn’t too worried about that though, at the moment he had an advantage over Rick, he had Gillian and he seriously doubted that Rick was stupid enough to risk her life with an attack.

He told the group that they were not to treat them like any other community, reminding them they had attacked one of their outpost before, leaving no survivors.

No compassion or kind gestures were to be shown, ever, they had to be cruel if they needed to, he said, to show them what hell Gillian was living everyday, when in fact she was not. It was all a show, an act, all of it.

In the far right of the gathered crowd, a man was listening attentively, a wicked smile on his face. Jared. He had long brown hair tucked behind his ears, an insufferable grin constantly on his face that made you want to punch him, and he always walked around like he owned the place. He was one of the guys who went on retrieval runs in other communities, and they all hated him without question. If there was always someone to cause problems, it was him, he just couldn’t help it, the man was just evil and he wasn’t the only one in the Savior’s camp.

A visit to Alexandria like this one was a golden opportunity for him to cause disarray once again, hence his undivided attention this morning. He couldn’t wait to go, he was like a kid waiting for a ride to Disney Land. Most of all he wanted to teach that one-eyed kid a lesson for looking at him sideways. Carl didn’t scare easily for a kid, even when he was on his knees, he hadn’t flinched when Jared had threatened him at gun point to have his weapon. Oh, that night had been tensed all right, Rick almost lost Maggie and Jared was really close to put a round up Carl’s skull.

Completely regardless, kid or not, Jared decided he would have a go at him, he was born ready to make the life of Alexandrians a misery.

When Gillian arrived, the door of the infirmary was wide open, she glanced around the room and saw Carson doing whatever doctors do when there is no patients to be treated. She knocked on the door to notify him of her presence and he offered her that warm smile of his as he turned on his rotating chair.

“Good morning, Gillian, what brings you here today?” he asked
“Oh, nothing too serious’’ she reassured him “‘How his Jason ?’’

“‘He’s….well, still grieving, I guess. But he managed to tell me what happened yesterday without breaking so I reckon he will be better in a few days. He’s a tough lad.’’ She nodded and they stayed silent for a few seconds. He cocked his head to the side, noticing she wasn’t over with him yet ”’Yes ?’’

She jumped from her thoughts ‘‘Sorry what ?’’

‘‘Are you alright ?’’ he kindly laughed

‘‘Me ? Yes, of course, no, I was wondering if you had some pads or tampons maybe ?’’

Shit he cursed inwardly, how could he have forgotten about that

‘‘Oh, of course, I’m so sorry I forgot to tell you’’ he apologized and went to open a drawer ”’We have sanitary towels in self service right there, you can come and collect them whenever you want, there’s no key to that drawer’’ he said, handing her enough material to hold the cycle

‘‘Thank you’’ she said and he nodded ‘‘Well, I should go, I’m probably needed somewhere’’

‘‘Negan hasn't summoned you for the run ?’’ Carson asked confused, not as confused as Gillian though

‘‘The run ?’’

‘‘Yes, to Alexan-…’’ he cut himself short. Obviously Negan hadn't told her, he realized. There was no use to lie about it now, he knew she was no fool ‘‘You didn’t know’’ he bowed his head, biting his lower lip. Gillian threw her head back, eyes wide shut, she wanted to curse so fucking loud, to hit something or someone but Carson was the only one around and there was no way she was going to hit him.

‘‘Where are they now ?’’ she asked as she started to leave, putting the pads in the large pockets of her military vest

I’m gonna regret this, Carson thought ‘‘Court yard, where the motorcycles are.'’

Gillian thanked him and practically ran towards the place. She lost her way twice but finally arrived to the promised land.

Negan hadn’t finished his speech and she just couldn’t interrupt him in the middle of it, she was still a nobody around there, so she just laid against the doorframe and fixed him with her best angry eyes. After a few minutes he finally noticed her, although she figured he ignored her on purpose. He rushed the end of his speech though and dismissed the group with a few words and a wave of his hand.

As they all left the courtyard Gillian ran her eyes all around the place, the number of motorcycles parked here was rather impressive. Harleys, Triumphs, Yamahas and who knows what else, all the models were there, it was like a god damn store. No need to say that most of these vehicles had been stollen from others, Gillian didn’t miss Daryl’s among the others.

Just at this moment a man stopped right in front of her, it was Jared

“‘You that Alexandria chick, huh ?’’ he looked her up and down under Negan’s dubious watch

‘‘Looking for some quality time, mmh, you hungry bitc-‘’

‘‘Jared !’’ Negan growled from behind, clearly displeased with what was about to be said ‘‘Get the fuck outta here and mind your fucking tongue with the ladies.’’ Jared stood tall, fixing Negan in the eye as an act of defiance but finally nodded and left.

Gillian glared back at the motorcycles as if nothing had happened ‘‘Nice collection’’ she congratulated him dryly.
“Thank you…” he said hesitating. She had just made him a compliment yet he could see by the expression on her face she was utterly pissed. No need to mention he knew exactly why. “Is there a problem, private…” he adjusted his eyes to see the name written on her military vest “Hastings?” he rose his eyebrows questioningly.

She crossed her arms across her chest and walked towards him “Didn't feel you needed to tell me a little something?”

He shook his head no “I don't need to do anything, Sweetheart” he reminded her with a cold gaze

“But you told me-’”

“I told you” he cut her ‘‘that I would think about it’’ which was true “And all things considered I decided that I wouldn’t bring you” he continued.

“How will they know I’m alright?” she challenged him, he wasn’t impressed and smirked at her face, which she didn’t appreciate at all

“They’ll have to take my word for it and fuck them if they don’t believe me”

“You’re not very cooperative for someone who desperately wants to get in my pants.” His eyes suddenly lit up, now she got his attention. Negan took one step forward so they were just few centimeters apart, a tentative smile on his lips. She started to play along and it was needless to say that he liked that very much.

“Smart girl” he said in a low voice

“Look” she said more seriously “I know you’re just gonna tell them some bullshit about me to piss them off if I’m not here and this isn’t gonna end well”

“And you are absolutely right!” he gave her an I-don’t-give-two-fucks smile and she really thought she was going to punch him, even though that was very ill advised

“Come on, let me go!” she tried

“No fucking way” and with that, he leaned towards her in a heartbeat, grabbed her shoulders and stole her a kiss on the cheek. If he could have taken a picture of the look on her face at this moment, man, would he have done it, it was truly priceless, that mix between surprise, anger and disbelief. Gillian jumped backwards and shot him a death glare of the ages, which made his smile widen a little more “I really must be going” he laughed, walking to the door

“What the hell was that for?!’” she shouted angrily after him

He turned back to face her and laid his large palms on the doorframe ‘‘Getting a little more in your pants, darlin’’ he winked and then disappeared. Okay, she was definitely going to punch him someday. Gillian stayed motionless for a bit, she couldn’t believe he had just done that, and it was just a peck on the cheek.

As she tried to find her way back to her room, her mind was still racing furiously whereas there was nothing to go crazy about.

“Out of the way!!” someone screamed from behind her and she had just the time get against the wall to avoid him from tackling her down “Sorry” he apologized. Then she saw Arat running too, she was carrying something

“Arat what’s going on?” Gillian asked worried
Arat barely stopped "It’s Nigel, the man you saved the other day, remember?"

"Yes of course, what happened?"

"He’s in bad shape" Arat breathed "very bad shape. I have to go" and she started running again

"Wait- do you need help?" Arat shouted back a no it’s fine that Gillian almost didn't catch. She laid against the wall like this for a few minutes feeling stupid and useless. Poor Nigel she thought, he had been stable the past few days and it hadn’t been easy for him, learning the loss of his leg. She truly hoped he would get better but Arat’s words weren’t reassuring at all. She needed to find some sort of occupation as quick as possible, the only thought of doing nothing while some were busting their asses to save lives was unbearable for her. They always needed a hand in the fruits and vegetables department so that’s where she headed.

The following two days were rather calm, there were no runs, no attack had occurred and everybody was doing their job as they should. Even Jason was feeling better, he had spent his time helping people, talking with them, getting back to life. Human contact was all he needed to live again a little. On her side Gillian had been busy too, she was on every front, not taking a minute for herself. When she wasn’t stocking some food she was cleaning the field of unwanted walkers, or she was reloading the weapons and who know’s what else.

It was the middle of the afternoon and the day had been impossibly hot. Gillian was exhausted and not to mention sweating like a pig, she thought a nice shower was in order.

As the water was pouring over her face and body she told herself showers will never feel this good again. There was nothing like a cold shower after a hard day’s work. Realizing she had left her clothes on the bed she wrapped herself in a towel, opened the door and a yelp escaped her throat as she discovered Negan standing nonchalantly between her and her clothes.

"Jesus!" she spat tightening the towel around herself and praising herself for not exiting the bathroom completely naked

"That ain't my name but I’m still happy to be there" he smirked as he enjoyed the sight of her. The towel moulded her forms perfectly and there was very small place left for his imagination.

"Sorry to interrupt" he apologized more or less seriously

"I bet you are" she muttered sarcastically, going to grab her clothes and he didn’t move on purpose. She looked up at him with fiery eyes and returned to the bathroom to get dressed.

While waiting for her to get out, he inspected the room. Everything was all clean, folded and practically left untouched as if she hadn’t planned to stay long. He genuinely smiled at that. Her military vest was displayed on the bed, his eyes fell on the name again. Hastings. He wondered if it was her last name. Though he remembered her saying she had not served in the army.

He searched the front pockets, quickly glancing towards the door to check she wasn’t here, and his fingers brushed against a little piece of paper. A picture. He recognized Gillian as soon as he saw her, the man circling her waist on the other hand, he didn’t know him and he didn’t recall seeing him the night he took Gillian. He looked a bit older than her but there was no doubt, this here was her man. Well shit he thought, that would make things a little more complicated, but he wasn’t one to back down from a good challenge.

"Ha hum" he almost jumped "I believe that’s mine" she said approaching but didn’t attempt to grab it back, he had seen it anyway.

He didn’t even seem slightly bothered to be caught red handed "Who’s the lucky man?" he asked playfully, waving the picture in the air just before her eyes. Gillian wasn’t laughing, her features had hardened, it seemed obvious to him she wasn’t going to answer that question. "Just a name then?" he pleaded, cocking his head to the side and pouting his lips.
Gillian breathed hard and shook her head. “Conrad. Conrad Hastings” she answered in a low voice. The name on the vest Negan realized. That’s one mystery eluded he thought. “Good looking man” he admitted honestly, handing her the picture, not without a little hint of jealousy. “Any particular reason why you never mentioned him?” she was suddenly growing impatient with him. He leaned forward “My guess is he’s just not worthy of-.”

Her right hand connected with his cheek with a surprising force, though surprise wasn’t the word he had in mind. He saw stars for a second and had to grip the edge of the drawer behind him with one hand the other resting on his burning cheek. Holy fucking shit, she’s got the fucking swing alright he said inwardly.

He was about to get pretty angry with her but his anger stopped short when he saw her face. Her eyes were full of tears, although she knew she wouldn’t let them fall, her jaw was clenched and her whole body seemed to be shaking. His features smoothened as he realized he had fucked up big time.

“He was my husband” she managed. Her use of the past didn’t escape him of course and he felt like shit was suddenly raining over him. Inside he was cursing himself with every word he could think of and even that wasn’t enough to feel better. He wanted to apologize so badly, make her understand that he had never intended to insult her in any way but unfortunately, whatever he wanted to tell her, she couldn’t ear it. He tried anyway.

“Gillian, I’m really sor-.”

“And he was everything but unworthy” she threw him, not letting him finish. Her expression couldn’t be defined, she seemed impacted by all of this, and taken back to old memories. Her tears hadn’t fall from her eyes, he was relieved, the last thing he wanted was to be the man who made her cry. He slowly sat on the bed, more because he needed to then he wanted to.

“Sit with me” he gently asked. She didn’t move a muscle. He could have got rough with her, and ordered that she sat the fuck down but he just couldn’t. “Just talk to me” his voice broke a little and he flinched, not liking the sound of it.

“What for?”

“So I get to know you better” he said with all the honesty in the world, taking back the picture from her to look at it again. He wanted to take back what he had said before but he had broken her, opened a deep wound. The only thing he could do now was to try to fix her, piece by piece. Negan patted the space next to him “Sit with me” he felt she was at this from accepting his demand “Please?” There wasn’t much else she could do so she obliged, taking a seat right next to him so that their legs were touching. Gillian didn’t see him smile at her as she was plunged deep in her thoughts. He waited patently for her to begin her story.

“I was there when it happened” she started, closing her eyes to remember, even if she knew she would never forget “We were together with his family when people started to get sick.”

“And any children? Yours, I mean?” He realized he had just interrupted her in the middle of her phrase. She didn’t mind.

“No I-“ she hesitated “I couldn’t have any” she admitted and he nodded quietly “Not that I wanted some but anyway” she cleared her throat “The first thing we thought about was to get out of the city, no matter what, go where it was less crowded. His family wanted to stay home so it ended up to be just the two of us. In the beginning we had a car and we decided to head for the state’s military base thinking it would be a safe place. The car lasted half the distance, after that we lacked gazoline so we went on on foot. When we finally reached the base it was completely deserted, there were very few roamers so we settled inside. It was like paradise” she laughed, remembering how happy they were at the time, before things got out of hand for everyone “There was food, weapons, countless ammos, we could have lasted weeks, even months. We stayed a
while, that was only the two of us but we had the wits to survive. His time in the army turned out to be useful on many occasions, and he taught me a lot too. Everything was perfect, until a herd came one day. We had never seen anything like that, we found ourselves trapped in a corridor, much like we were four days ago. The door that led outside was warded, there was no way to open it, but Conrad noticed there was a breach in the ceiling. It was high but reachable if you took the time’ she paused for a second, remorse pouring over her as it did each time she went over that story ‘‘There was no time’ she shook her head ‘’not for two.’’

She was shaking again Negan could see as he had kept his eyes on her the all time. She looked like a doll made of porcelain, ready to break at any moment. He hesitated, then took her hand in his, a gesture to which she didn’t protest. “It’s okay” he comforted her and he swore he felt her squeeze his hand back

“Go, he said to me, I’ll catch up. I think he already knew he couldn’t make it at this moment, and I wanted to believe him so I jumped up. It really was damn high and it took me a few tries to just grip the ceiling. The walkers were getting close, too close. Then Conrad he…” her breathing increased with each second “he threw himself at them, so they would have something to focus on while I was struggling to get myself up” she said, an hint of anger in her voice “When I looked down to reach for his hand I heard him scream. And then I saw him, ripped apart. I couldn’t reach him, I couldn’t end him either. I could just watch and cry, and wait for the walkers to go away. When I got down again there wasn’t anything left to see.”

Even though he didn’t want to, Negan released her hand from his and replaced it with the picture. When he looked up she was still drowned in her memories. Him of all people knew that no matter how many time had passed, the pain could never be washed away. It was like a part of you had been taken away from you, and there was no taking it back.

He got up in silence and walked to the door, his back facing her he apologized one more time “I’m really sorry”

“I know” she replied. He sighed in relief, knowing that she saw he was sorry was good enough for him to go to sleep in piece, but it didn’t prevent his old demons from coming and haunt his dreams that night, for he too was a broken man.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Another chapter tomorrow, again thank you for your patience :)
The next morning, Negan got out of bed with a slightly heavy heart, not feeling too good with himself, which was a rare thing. Yesterday's little chat with Gillian was still very much on his mind. He remembered every detail of her story, this mix between sadness, anger and regret in her eyes was something he wouldn’t forget any time soon.

Negan was a mean man, the biggest sadist you could possibly find around, but hurting people with personal things, the things that really hurt the most, had never been something he was fond of. He could remember a few other times when he had got ahead of himself, hurt people and regretted it right after. Making people’s life miserable was his specialty but on the other hand he wanted to be around cheerful and happy persons. Oh the man was as complicated as they come, that was for sure. He was a joyful man, fucked up but joyful.

With Gillian though, he didn’t really know what he was, how he should be. He sensed that something was slowly building between the two of them, whatever that was he certainly didn’t want to lose it over conversations like yesterday. At the same time he knew he had to keep his distance with her, he was no fool, he realized how different he acted when it was just them, how different he wanted to be. She had a grip on him and he was thankful she hadn’t realized that yet.

Today was going to be a bloody good day for him, he would be able to be a hundred percent Negan, the Negan everybody knew and feared. Today he was finally going to Alexandria for a little shopping session. Free items of course. This would be the opportunity for him to put on a great show and make an impression. He had no intention to go easy on them what so ever.

Three big trucks were already parked just before the gates and ready to go, and there were more men coming on motorcycles and cars.

Negan had combed his thick black hair nicely, looks as always, very important. Clean white shirt, grey trousers tucked in his boots, leather jacket zipped up to the collar and Lucille of course, in his gloved hand. He was ready for battle.

As he was walking to the vehicles, his eyes fell over Gillian who was already at work, helping with the walkers at the entry. This was not her work to do, only people working for points were given that particularly treacherous job. With someone else he would’ve asked to leave and let the workers do the dirty job, but this was Gillian. She was chatting with Arat and didn’t even seem slightly bothered by the task at hand, not to mention how good she was doing, and after what had
happened last evening, Negan felt like he had something to be forgiven for. So he simply let her be, that was what a woman like her deserved, he thought, just be free of all chains and restrictions to live the life she aspired to. Somehow, being the one that forbade her to do so made him feel guilty.

Remembering he had a job to do himself today, he shook her out of his head completely because he knew she was able to bring the soft side in him, and he needed everything but his soft side right now.

Unfortunately for him, when he sat on the passenger’s seat of the big truck, he could still see her reflection in the rear view. *Heaven’s fuck me* he cursed inwardly while knocking ferociously on his door

“C’mon you lazy fucks, get a move on !! Let’s give’em hell” he barked and they were on their way to Alexandria.

**In Alexandria**

Rick, like he had for around a week now, woke up with butterflies in his stomach. They hadn’t heard a word from Gillian or the Saviors, not even a sign, and Negan hadn’t come to collect his provisions. Not that he particularly wanted to see the man again, quite the opposite in fact, but he was holding someone he cared for and meeting him was his only opportunity to hear from Gillian.

Not knowing was the worst thing, alive, dead, healthy or nor, he didn’t have a clue of her actual state and he couldn’t stand that.

Alexandria had become very quite since she had been taken, they all missed her cheerfulness, her as an overall and her reassuring presence, because anyone who’d seen her fight before, and they had, wouldn’t even think of messing with her.

Rick washed his face and mumbled a few words he had begun to say since Gillian was gone, a prayer of sorts, then joined Michonne who was waiting for him by the door. He kissed her lovingly and they exited the house for their morning round.

The walk was unbearably silent for a while, as it had been the past few days, each one knew what the other was thinking about.

“Still no word from Negan” Rick stated absently, realizing he had not much else to say and that this was getting them nowhere.
Michonne nodded “That bastard will show up soon enough”. She stopped walking in the middle of the street “But Gillian…” she bit her lip in irritation “We still haven’t figure out what to do for her. It’s killing me!” she sounded so desperate, and she had reasons to.

Rick walked towards her, taking her hands in his and massaging them

“I know, but there ain’t much we can do now” he said and she gave him the look, that damn look he didn’t what to answer to, except that they had done everything they could for now. So that’s what he said again “We went on recognition around the place, three times, you saw how many they were and that wasn’t even all of them” the hurt in his voice could be heard from a mile away, he couldn’t remember a time when he had ben so powerless like time, waiting without knowing. “One way would be to try and make contact with her but we’re not even sure they’re holding her in the factory”.

Michonne nodded in realization and remembered another problem they might cross path with “And there is Sasha” she paused, waiting for Rick to acknowledge that fact but he didn’t, instead he stared at her questioningly “She’s not going to wait much longer, Rick”

And it all came back to him “Oh yeah, I know, they’re best friends”

Michonne gripped his arm tightly “Rick I’m afraid she does something-”

“RIIIICK !! They’re coming !!” Gabriel’s voice rose from the watchtower. “The Saviors are coming !!”

Rick and Michonne exchanged worried looks and at the same time, they realized that Gillian might be with them. They ran fast to the tower and Rick joined Gabriel at the top of it. His jaw clenched as he saw the number her vehicles heading for their gates, they were more than them, again. His stomach tightened a little more, reminding him he was the one powerless when Negan was around.

A few curious Alexandrians had started to gather near the gate to see what was happening, and soon practically the all community was there, looking up at Rick with gloomy questioning eyes. He climbed down the ladder, thinking about was he should say to them, even though there wasn’t much to be said. If anything had to happen today, it wouldn’t come from them but from the Saviors. They would be the ones to provoke them, he knew that, and they would have to take it all without responding.

When he spoke his voice was uptight, and his hands damp “You all know what’s coming. Today the Saviors, their leader, they’re gonna try to intimidate us, provoke us, maybe harm us. I want you to ignore all of this, every single one of you, because our lives, the lives of your neighbors, of your families, depend on it.” Now he was walking among them, like a leader should do. He had
to swallow back his fear, it was eating him right now but for the sake of his people he had to push it away and stand tall. And that’s what he did “As you know they have one of our own” his eyes met Sasha’s “I know what I ask of you his hard but any agression, any sign of rebellion could threaten her life, and we don’t want that. Keep your weapons down, stay calm, do what they tell you to do without protesting and be careful” he said very seriously, he really meant what he said “They are not here to play games and we know by know how dangerous they are”.

He walked over to Sasha, taking her head in his hands ‘’You just hold on today, okay ? We’ll figure out something, I promise’’ he swore and she nodded silently.

Just when he finished his speech, a symphony of roaring engines could be heard just behind the gate, a few meters apart only. The big walls of Alexandria suddenly felt as thin as ice can be, they felt like they were worthless. Rick could feel his heart pounding against his chest as if it wanted to get out, he wasn’t sure what frightened him the most, Negan’s plan for them today or the reveal of Gillian’s fate.

He, like everyone else, heard a car door open behind the gate and then measured steps walking towards them. They weren’t sure who that was until the person started whistling that unbearable tone they heard a few nights ago.

Slowly, a silhouette formed with the reflexion of the sun, Negan’s figure they could tell by the unmistakable barbed-wire bat.

He stopped inches from the portal and suddenly stopped whistling.

Silence had taken over the place. Rick waited, fists tight, sweat dripping down his forehead and neck, his breathing erratic.

All of a sudden, Negan rose his bat and knocked hard on the steel bars of the portal, three times. “Little pig, little pig !”’ he chanted “Let.me.in!”.

Gabriel, who had climbed down too, looked at Rick questioningly, waiting for him to give the order. The latter nodded and Gabriel pulled heavily on the sliding portal, revealing Negan and his impressive number of men for this special visit. Rick searched for Gillian with hi eyes but she was nowhere to be found. He should have known, this would have been to easy and Negan wasn’t one to give it easy.

He smiled openly at Rick, he was enjoying this so much, making people uncomfortable. Rick on the other hand, had found a way to hide his fear and had replaced his features with pure anger. If he didn’t know better, Negan would start running the other way and leave the man be. But he was confident he wasn’t going to try anything so he walked to him instead. “Well hello there, Rick !” he greeted him and looked at him intently, trying to figure out what those angry eyes were really
hiding “I’ve missed you”.

Rick didn’t let anything trespass “I’m afraid I can’t say the same about you” he decided to be honest with the man, licking his boots wasn’t his type and he didn’t think Negan would like that either knowing he wanted to rip him apart.

“Ow, you’re hurting my feelings there, Rick” he took an offended look “Thank God I got a consolation prize at home” he said suggestively and waited for Rick’s reaction. He clenched his teeth and took a step towards Negan. Oh, this will be fun Negan thought.

He rose his bat a little when Rick came to close, and his men pointed their guns at him. There was no way, only Negan’s way.

“Is there something you want to say, Rick?” Negan asked

“Where is she?”

“Oh, no no no, certainly not!” he drawled “I ask the questions, you answer them” he said sharply, he was angry now. “Do you want to know how she’s doing?” he asked

Rick hesitated, was this a trick or a bad joke? He bet on a ‘no’ “Yes”

Negan laughed and threw his arm around Rick’s shoulders, Lucille dangerously close to his face. He looked at his people with an apologizing face, he knew there was nothing he could do now “I’d say she is” he searched for the word “blooming, you know what I’m saying! We spend a lot of time together, some would say too much time, but hey, when you’ve tasted her once... mmmh it’s hard not to reiterate” he said wickedly and that was the triggering point for Rick. He shoved Negan away from him, and he stayed like that, looking at him and hating himself for not doing anything more.

“I don’t like that look, Rick” Negan growled, not happy with how the visit was going “I strongly suggest you take that fucking look off your face” he said, even though it wasn’t exactly a suggestion.

“Do as he says, Rick” Sasha’s voice surprised the both of them and they turned to look at her

“You should listen to the lady” Negan counseled, realizing he had seen her face somewhere before “You were there, that night, weren’t you?” she nodded “Ohhh it’s good to finally see some friendly faces!” he said pleased. He walked among the Alexandrians, searching for familiar
some friendly faces!'' he said pleased. He walked among the Alexandrians, searching for familiar faces. ''You, I know'' he pointed Michonne and Abraham and continued his little quest ''Nice to see you again caveman'' he sniggered at Daryl and the latter groaned which Negan ignored completely. He was looking for that pregnant woman, she didn't look good at all last time he saw her, he wanted to know how she was doing. Unfortunately he didn't see see her, but he recognized what he assumed to be her husband ''Hey, my little China boy, where's your lovely woman ?''

''I’m Korean'' Glenn corrected him in a soft tone, which did not prevent Negan from giving him the eye

He cleared his throat ‘’Do we really wanna discuss this right now ? Where is she ?’’ he asked again

Negan couldn’t know she was at the Hilltop, knowing these two communities were helping each other wouldn’t suit him at all.

‘’She’s ill’’ Rick stated before Glenn could say anything ‘’We don’t know what it is but she’s not well, she’s resting now’’.

Negan looked at Glenn ‘’We don’t know if she’s gonna make it’’ Glenn carried on Rick’s lie perfectly, enough to have Negan fooled

‘’Wow…I’m sorry for you guys’’ he said honestly ‘’I huh, I hope she gets better, I really do’’

Then his eyes fell on Carl, oh he remembered him all right, that kid had challenged Jared not so long ago, that was hard to forget. He posted himself before him and lifted his hat

‘’Ain’t it that badass kid from the other day !’’ he said playfully ‘’Hell ! You’re so cute when you’re angry, kid !’’ he laughed, Carl didn’t. ‘’Same look as your father, huh ?’’ He glanced back at Rick and rose impressed eyebrows. ‘’Now! I believe we came to collect some things ! Rick ?’’

‘’I, huh, we haven’t- I mean the food is still stored ‘’ he stammered, he really hadn’t planned for him to come today

‘’Beginner’s mistake, Rick. It’s okay’’ he reassured him ‘’First time for everything. That will be an opportunity for you to give us the full tour while my guys…help themselves !’’ Rick nodded, relieved somehow, Negan could have made a fucking scandal about this if he had wanted to.
In a matter of seconds, Saviors were everywhere, entering the houses as if they were theirs, taking the furnitures out and leaving the rooms in an impossible mess under the frightened gaze of the Alexandrians. Of course they took the best items, leaving them with the most simple things, useless ones too.

Negan was impressed, to say the least, he saw they had been working hard to get there and settle, he didn’t doubt they would do the same for him with the right motivation, which he already had. He liked the place, it was so different from the Sanctuary, they had real houses. That was something he missed, getting home and close the front door. The Sanctuary only had one front door, the rest was just rooms, rooms and more rooms.

They walked passed the infirmary, the armory as they were half emptied by his men. He literally smiled at the weapons, that was some serious artillery they had in there, he wondered how they came to acquire so many weapons.

It took them almost two hours to get everything and stuff them inside the trucks and cars. They were almost full.

They were all at the entrance again waiting for the last crates, Negan was more then pleased with what he had seen today. They had been cooperative too, which was always a good thing, people could always be hurt on both sides, no matter the numbers.

The last man was Jared, he came back with a box full of drugs. Negan glanced at him suspiciously, he thought they had already taken what they needed.

As he was walking, Jared was fixing Carl intensely and when he reached him, he willingly bumped into him hard. Carl didn’t expect that so he stumbled before stabilizing himself

“Excuse you” he threw. That was exactly what Jared wanted and all he needed to respond. He dropped the box on the ground, grabbed his rifle and with a large smile on his face, hit Carl with the butt stock of the weapon. This time the boy was knocked down, he felt dizzy for a few seconds, and when he was fully conscious again, he drew his gun on Jared who immediately did the same. And just like that, Saviors where pointing their weapons at Alexandrians and they, in turn, pointed their guns at them. That was exactly the situation Negan and Rick wanted to avoid. The tension was palpable, the Saviors were at least twice as much as Alexandrians but if bullets started flying, they could lose a lot of their own so that was out of the question.

Sasha was just behind Jared, her gun against the back of his head. She had noticed him the minute he set foot inside Alexandria, the guy was bad news.
“All right, I see we find ourselves in a...complicated situation” Negan said and turned to Rick.
“There are several options here, and all of them end up with all of you dead, except for one. Is this what we want?” he asked Rick but he didn’t respond. He was thinking actually, maybe this was the time to show the Saviors they didn’t own them, that they had the guts to respond. He knew it was risky, foolish even, but he had had enough.

Negan’s blood was boiling now, it killed him just how people were selfish and stupid sometimes. “I’m tired of your bullshit, Rick” he gripped Lucille with both hands “Now, I believe I didn’t make myself clear last night so here it goes again. You’re gonna drop your fucking weapons now! ’Cause if you don’t, I’m gonna start cutting body parts, Gillian’s if that wasn’t clear enough already, and I’m gonna send you those pieces in little bundles like it’s fucking Christmas! Do you understand that?!” he was screaming now, his eyes burning with fury “I didn’t come here play, Rick, so I tell you what, you don’t order your guys to lower their weapons, Jared puts a bullet in your son’s head. And I don’t give a shit what happens next” he stated.

Rick looked at his son, he was down on the ground with Jared towering over him. And then he pictured the bullet go and was terrified at what he saw. He couldn’t let that happen. He nodded to Negan “Okay” he addressed his people “Drop your weapons”.

Most of them looked at him with questioning expressions “Do it”.

They did as they were told, dropping them all on the ground, except for Sasha.

Rick looked at her, then at Negan who was growing impatient “Sasha?” he asked but received no response.

She wanted to shoot so badly and on the other hand she thought about what could happen to Gillian. Suddenly she felt something at the back of her own head. Arat’s gun “Drop it”. Sasha could only imagine what would happen if she didn’t do as she was told. The four of them had formed some kind of death chain that she better not trigger. She lowered her arm and surrendered.

Jared wasn’t finished tough, he gripped Carl by the collar and lifted him up “You little shit, I’m gonna teach you some fucking manners!” he said furiously.

“You’ll do no such thing” Negan interrupted him “Let the kid go”.

“But he fucking pushed me!”

“Aaaargh Stop being such a pussy you’re making me uncomfortable. Now let the kid go!” he barked and Jared obliged, shoving Carl back down. He couldn’t believe Negan had just called him a pussy in front of everybody “Arat don’t leave Sasha until we’re finished” she nodded. “I’m gonna need you to hand over your weapons” Negan stated, addressing Rick’s people.
They all looked at each other, not really understanding what he was asking, Rick wanted to make sure “We can’t do that, you left us practically nothing in the armory”

“Do I look like I give a shit?” Negan asked rhetorically “This is punishment, for what just happened” Rick couldn’t believe this, how were there supposed to provide for them with no weapons to defend themselves? “I’m waiting Rick”

“Do as he says” Rick said knowing there was no use trying to bargain now.

Sasha turned to Arat and handed her the gun, as their hands touched, she felt her sliding a piece of paper in her hand “I didn’t read it” she muttered before Sasha could say anything. She quickly hid the paper in her back pocket and watched Arat go with her people.

Negan made one last statement before leaving “Thank you all for your cooperation, even if we could have avoided that kind of accident. I expect better next time” he said and then addressed Rick “We were this close, Rick, this close from catastrophe. I never, never, you hear me, want something like that happening again” Rick nodded absently, he just wanted him gone. And in a few minutes they all were.

Michonne hugged him, knowing what had almost happened today too and realizing the only information they now had about Gillian was that Negan was enjoying his sweet time with her.

Sasha had another lead. As soon as they were gone she ran to a quiet place and got the paper out, it was completely folded. When she finally opened it she let out a sigh of relief as she read the words.

*Doing fine. Bring car near Sanctuary asap. G.*

Chapter End Notes

A/N: You can see I quoted some characters we know from the comics and TV series, but unfortunately some very important characters like Daryl, Carl, Carol, Glenn and some others won’t be very present in this story because their story is too important so if I start telling their story too then I’ll lose track of my own. Hope this doesn’t bother
you, it bothers me haha! Again thank you for reading and following the story :)}
Hey there, I KNOW it's been ages, literally, and I don't even have a good excuse :( Hopefully you haven't given up on this story, if not, welcome back and thank you so much for reading!

Chapter Ten

*Doing fine. Bring car to Sanctuary asap. G.*

Sasha had reached her room and locked the door, she was staring at the little piece of paper with trembling hands. The woman had specifically given it to her, she had probably been asked to. This thought comforted Sasha a little, this could mean Gillian had got close to some of Negan’s people, close enough to be able to ask things from them.

Sasha flipped the paper over, there was something else written there, in a even smaller font. She stepped close to the window to get the daylight and focused on the tiny letters.

*1st intersec. before Sanctuary*

*Sanctuary?* Sasha thought…*What was Sanctuary?* That could only be one thing, she decided, this was were Gillian was being kept.

Sasha sat on her bed in a heavy sigh, some things were being processed in her brain and she didn’t know what to do with them.

First, should she tell someone in Alexandria? Or Rick? Of course she needed to tell Rick, he was in charge of them all, he could help and most of all, if she screwed up, everyone would suffer the consequence. However, if the plan went wrong, she didn’t want to involve anyone else, least of all Rick. He was indispensable, she thought.

Sasha would do anything for Gillian, and she was going to do. Should her attempt to save her fail, she would denounce herself no questions asked.

This wasn’t going to be a simple mission, barely thought over. No, this was going to be carefully prepared and she was going to do it alone, she couldn’t risk involving anyone else. Memorizing
the indications on the paper, Sasha climbed down the stairs to the kitchen and opened the drawer to find a small box of matches.

They were pretty old and she started to lose patience when the third match broke

“Fucking hell!” she muttered when finally, a flame came to life.

She kept the burning paper until the fire nearly burnt the tip of her fingers, then found no better idea than to drop it in the dry sink.

Now she was going to have to prepare for that thing, unfortunately she didn’t have much of head start to go with. For one she didn’t know where this Sanctuary was, she had to find some kind of excuse to borrow a car and return without it and most of all she had to remain unseen from the Saviors. One fuck up from her part and she could bid farewell to Gillian…and probably to her own life as well.

She walked to the front door and as her hand grabbed the handle she stopped. She was shaking from head to toe. She didn’t think she would hear from Gillian ever again, let alone directly from her. She was happy of course, but scared also, she didn’t want to fail her.

Taking a deep breath and putting on a relaxed expression on her face she opened the door and behaved as her usual routine. When people greeted her she smiled and waved back with enthusiasm.

The hardest part was to look Rick in the eye and tell him that everything was okay. She didn’t like lying to him like that, especially on something so important.

She walked passed him and went to work like everyone else. A day just like any other…

At the Sanctuary

The trucks were just crossing the entrance of the factory, Negan, ever since they had left Alexandria, was boiling in his seat, cursing Jared with all the words he could think of. Oh, they were going to have a little talk, that was for sure.

The vehicle hadn’t even stopeed but he jumped from it and started screaming orders

“All right people, you know what to do with all that shit! Store it, clean it if need be and get to fucking work!” he barked and they did as they were told. However not without exchanging some glances, Negan seemed particularly on edge.
Jared was about to grab a crate from the trunk but Negan gripped him ferociously and dragged him to the motorcycles’ parking lot. It was a quiet place, exactly what he needed for intimidation sometimes.

“Hey !” Jared was struggling to get out of his reach but he had a firm grip on him. When Negan finally pushed him forward, Jared tumbled on the ground

“What the fuck, man ?!” He said as he rose up

Negan took one step forward, lifting his bat in the air “What the fuck ?! Well that’s a bloody fucking good question indeed ! What the fuck were you tryin’ to do out there, huh ? Start a fucking war ?” It was unusual for him to get that much angry with his own people but he saw Rick’s eyes when they all had their guns drawn on each other, he was ready to fight. Negan didn’t dare think what would have happened if he had given the order to attack. Surely he wasn’t that foolish but still, people could do unbelievable things when pushed too hard.

Jared was looking at the ground, he seemed plunged in his thoughts ans his lack of response was starting to irritate his boss. He unsteadily pointed a finger at him and finally rose his eyes to look directly in his

“You” he said, chewing his saliva ‘‘called me a pussy’’. Negan stared at him dumbfounded and cursed under his breath, the man really was a fucking waste of time.

“Are you fucking kidding me ?” He roared.

Now it was Jared’s turn to step forward but he seemed to have some trouble walking straight. “I ain’t kiddin’, pal. You called me a fucking p-”

“Yeah, yeah, I got that the first time dumbass” Negan interrupted, putting his face in his hand in irritation. Then it hit him, Jared was completely drunk. He looked up at him again and he noticed he was constantly blinking. He must have picked a bottle in a crate or something, he thought.

“Jared ?” He asked in a voice full of reproach ‘‘Are you drunk ?”

“Don’t change the fucking subject !” Jared screamed in a shaking voice, he really had a lot of alcohol. “Apologize to me” he ordered in a much calmer voice.
Negan didn’t move or speak, he just stood there observing the man in front of him. There was no reasoning him whatsoever, at this point he sensed he could make him fall backwards by just pushing him with one finger. In his state, Jared simply couldn’t stand the silence.

“Fucking apologize to me you big-mouthed hillbilly!” He screamed, taking another step forward.

Not exactly comfortable with the new proximity, Negan did just the opposite, slowly backing up. His eyes were fixed on Jared’s gun, he feared the idiot was drunk enough to draw on him. He clearly was, and he had caught Negan’s eyes on his pistol.

“You think I’m a fool?” he asked pulling out the weapon and pointing it directly at Negan’s head. Now he was neck deep in trouble. Lucille was his only weapon now, he rarely carried a gun around because with all these guards he felt safe enough. He would never had thought the threat would come from one of his own. But there he was now, completely helpless with a man he couldn’t reason.

He swallowed hard, trying to come up with something, an idea, an escape plan, but he found none and Jared’s right hand, which was holding the weapon, was now shaking. That wasn’t comforting.

“Jared” Negan started, his throat dry “You are about to make an enormous mistake” he warned while trying to keep eye contact with the other man. “Now stop being a pain in the ass” Negan will be Negan “and put the fucking gun down so we can talk about this. Quietly.” He extended a hand to Jared but he tightened his grip on the weapon.

“You think you’re so untouchable, huh? You’re walking around like you own everything, you feed us with your grand speeches about rules and all that shit, use us like we’re your bitches and then dump us when you feel the need. But who the fuck are you?” he asked rhetorically “Just a fucking opportunist who happened to be there at the right fucking time and who turned into some wanna be king.” He loaded the gun “Well you know what?” He laughed “Fuck this” he pointed the Sanctuary “And fuck you.”

Negan heard the shot and shut his eyes tight. It echoed around the Sanctuary for a few seconds, leaving Negan wondering why he was still able to hear that echo.

He opened his eyes and ran his hands on his face, torso and stomach, looking for blood, a whole the bullet would have caused but found nothing. However he did see Jared who was now lying on the ground. He wasn’t dead, just badly hurt and was squirming under the pain.

“Holy fucking shit” Negan cursed as he started to look around for the shooter. His heart skipped as he saw Gillian in the doorframe, a gun in her hand. Her heart too was racing, it had been a long
time since she had shot a man, she could have gone a few more days without it.

Putting the gun away she scampered towards Negan who seemed to be in shock

‘Are you okay?’ She asked with concern but he didn’t respond, he couldn’t take his glance away from the moving body at his feet. The thought that he could have been dead by now because of some bullshit like that hit him like a bad punch in the gut. The all thing was so stupid, so simple and yet it could have been the death of him.

‘God damn son of bitch, I should have put him down a long fucking time ago’ he spat ‘always here scraping the shit and-’’

‘Negan!’ Gillian cut him ”he’s still breathing, I’m taking him to Carson”

‘You’re not seriously considering that!’ he said outraged

‘He was dead drunk’ she shook her head in disbelief. He was one of his for goodness’ sake. ”That’s not even something we should discuss! We are bringing him to the infirmary, now”.

Maybe she was right after all, and he absolutely didn’t want to argue with her at the moment, having seen and heard enough for the day.

‘What’s going on here?’ A bunch of Negan’s goons had ran towards the shot to see what was going on but Negan cursed them, waving them to go away

‘Go back to fucking work, everything is under control!’ They looked at him in a strange way, seeing the legs of a body moving behind him. They suspected it was just a walker and walked back to where they came from.

In the infirmary Carson was pacing, he had some very bad news for Negan and didn’t know yet that this was a very bad time. He tossed his bloodyed gloves in the bin and turned off the electrocardiogram. Resting both his hands on the counter behind him he fixed the covered body on the bed, there was not much else he could do anyway. Contemplating one of his many failures, again, at least that’s was he always told himself.

As the door opened forcefully he jumped
“Carson we’re gonna need your expertise” Negan greeted him. He was holding Jared’s arms and was walking backwards. Gillian was on the other end of the body, holding the legs. She nodded silently at Carson.

Negan was so focused on the task at hand that he didn’t notice the body on the second bed. Gillian was already aware, she was with Carson when it had happened.

“We have a gun shot wound right under the…shit, how it that called again ?” Negan asked

“The liver, Negan, it’s the liver” Carson told him “and actually it’s right in it” he deplored.

On the bed Jared was suffering, he had blood coming out of his mouth and he was fighting to get some air.

“I don’t have much morphine or painkillers left and this will require a lot” he warned as he opened the drawers.

Looking at the dying man before him, Negan wondered if he really was worth wasting all those medicines. Sure, he would be grateful for saving him, for a time. But what then ? Then he would remember this encounter in the parking lot, Negan calling him a ‘pussy’. Nothing would ever be the same between them and he would have to live while constantly having to watch out for him. This was something he really didn’t wanna have to do. Useless and complicated things were poison and he knew it. To him, right now, Jared was a dead weight. Not to mention a pain in the ass dead weight. This wasn’t the first time he had gone rogue, the incident in Alexandria was just one more among many others.

Dead weights were not welcomed in the Sanctuary, therefore…

“Carson ?” Negan called absently

“Mmh ?”

“Forget the painkillers” he simply said

Carson frowned and froze, not sure of what was being asked of him “Excuse me ?” Gillian
turned to Negan, fearing she had understood what he had implied

“You can’t mean it” she breathed, instinctively stepping between Negan and the bed. He had feared a reaction like like from her, knowing she was going to make things even more complicated than they already were, he cursed himself for not sending her away after they had brought Jared back inside. Not that he was particularly happy with the thought of letting someone die, quite the opposite in fact, but he wasn’t averse to the idea, not in the right circumstances anyway.

Careful not to use any harsh words he tried to explain himself, bringing her slightly aside by the arm

“Gillian, you don’t know the guy”

“Oh, ‘cause I need to know someone to spare him, that’s sounds nice” she laughed

“He’s dangerous” he countered seriously “You weren’t in Alexandria earlier”

“Thanks to you” she mumbled sarcastically

“Will you listen to me for fuck’s sake !” Now he got her attention “We came this close to a fucking butchery back there. This cunt” he pointed Jared “didn’t stand being pushed by a kid and almost killed him”. Negan knew he was using strong words, but that was for the greater good.

“The kid ?” Gillian panicked “Carl ? Oh my god, is he alright ?” She asked in distress and Negan reassured her

“Yeah, yeah, there was no harm done in the end but shit, he saw red and when he does, things can get out of hand pretty quickly. Just like you saw in the parking lot”.

In Negan’s defense, Carson stepped in the conversation

“It’s not the first time he does something like that.” He didn’t usually take part in talks involving the murder someone, because this is what it was going to be, but Negan was simply right on this one. Jared was a mad dog, always had been, and the power the Saviors had given him hadn’t
made things better, far from it. “Especially with the kids” he continued and Gillian was listening attentively “he has always been unnecessarily violent with them, in very sadistic and twisted ways. We had a similar incident few months ago” Negan nodded silently “except this time the kid was not as lucky as Carl.”

Carson turned his gaze to Jared, he was deliberating somehow. The nature of the decision displeased him deeply but it really was the right thing to do.

“If this is really what you want” he addressed Negan “then I approve it”. Negan sighed in relief, I knew he didn’t exactly need the doctor’s blessing but he very much liked to have it. Carson was a good man, reasonable, his approval allowed him to think he had good ideas sometimes. It could seem trivial to some but to him it was really important.

When Carson looked at Gillian however, she seemed completely lost in her thoughts, trying to separate right from wrong, ethical or not. A necessary evil is what it was, to prevent bad things from happening in the future. Unfortunately there was something in her that simply couldn’t completely accept this decision. She wasn’t disappointed in Carson, not exactly shocked either, maybe just a little surprised. Doctors had very often the hard task of making this type of treacherous choice, this was new for her and whenever she thought she had made her mind there was a blockage.

The doctor approached her and put both hands on her shoulders “Don’t think too much, otherwise you’ll go mad” he said in a calm tone

“But then how do I know it’s the right thing to do?”

“The choice is not always good or bad, sometimes it just has to be made. This is one of those times.”

The two men waited for her response silently, exchanging some looks when then finally, she conceded

“Alright” she said in a weak voice, motioning for them to get on with it. All she was asking was not to order her to do it. Those were her only terms, Carson and Negan understood that.

The doctor would handle the task, that was required of him. He waited for Negan’s go ahead and then proceeded to grab the pillow from under Jared’s head. The man was looking at him with terrified eyes, he was already coughing and choking in his own blood and his eyes were red,
Carson hid those reproaching eyes with the pillow and pressed down on his face. Seeing that Jared was starting to struggle under the pressure, Negan grabbed both his hands and pinned them down to his sides. Gillian was watching the scene incredulously, it was longer then she would have expected. It was slow, terribly slow and Jared’s muffled screams made the thing even more unbearable to watch. His body was jerking in any way it could, instinctively trying to find a way out, it seemed it wasn’t even from Jared’s resolve anymore.

Finally the wriggling stopped after an impossibly long minute. Negan let the hands go and Carson carefully lifted the pillow. Jared was now completely still, dead.

Negan got his large knife out and without a word or second thought sunk it in the man’s skull. It was all done.

He sighed, as if freed from an exceedingly heavy weigh, then puffed

“Man, I don’t wanna sound mean or anything but I’m glad that’s fucking done” he said, trying to keep a hint of dignity. That didn’t shock Gillian, Negan was Negan, she knew that now and was starting to get used to it.

Suddenly Negan laid his eyes on the thing Carson had wanted to talk to him about

“The hell is this, you tryin’ some experimental things, C ?” he lifted the cover on the second bed and jumped back in horror as he caught glimpse of what was under it. “Fuck !”

Gillian and Carson looked at each other, they would have had preferred to be the ones to tell him. Negan questioned them with his eyes, still shaken by the discovery

“What the hell ?”

“Nigel passed while you were gone” Carson confessed sadly “his state has deteriorated the last few days, he was in a lot of pain and the leg infection wouldn’t stop. I really tried to-”

“I know you did, C.” Negan comforted him “You under some fucking pressure these day, huh. Looks like you could use some vacations” he tried to cool down the atmosphere
“Very funny” he complied

“Well fuck, it’s startin’ to make a fuckload of bodies” Negan pinched his nose and shook his head. He was really affected. “Jesus, I think I’ve seen enough for the day” he admitted “I better be off, guys, I’ll send someone to clean that mess”. He greeted Gillian and Carson and disappeared behind the door, closing it after him.

“That went better than I would have thought” Carson breathed before falling down on the nearest chair, putting his head back and resting both hands flat on his stomach.

“Are you alright?” Gillian asked with concern. It was obvious that he was exhausted. Exhausted from the work and the deaths.

“Yeah, I’m good. Just a little…affected by the late events. I’m sorry you had to be there for this”

“Oh, you know, I’ve seen some stuff too” she said “but enough about me. You” she took his arm and pulled him up “need food and coffee! C’mon, up you get”

There was no arguing when she was talking like that. Carson obliged and followed her to the main hall for a much needed break.
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

Hey, readers, back with another chapter today. You'll notice that I gave Sasha the role of Jesus in this one (not very clear but if you watch the show you'll understand what I mean, it has something to do with hiding in the Savior's truck...). So yeah I took that from the show so the idea is not mine, but for the rest it's 100% me certified! Hope you'll enjoy this one :)

Chapter Eleven

In Alexandria

Looking from left to right, making sure that there was nobody around, Sasha exited her house, closed the door and began her morning walk. Except it was earlier than usual, way earlier. The sun was barely starting to show it’s colors and there was a cool breeze blowing that made her shiver under her coat. She had thought about the thing all night, sleep had been very hard to find yesterday evening and nothing close to a plan had come to her since she had received the note from Gillian. For now she was just going to try to sneak inside the armory to see if there was any weapon she could take and - possibly - use.

The closer she was getting to the building, the harder her heart was beating. The feeling of doing something wrong wouldn’t go away. The magnitude of the task was being carried by only one person and its weight was increasing with each second. She could feel it now.

Finally standing before the door, she when to grab the key in her pocket but stopped short has she heard noise coming from inside. Slowly, she opened the door to find Rick ordering the guns and writing down some sort of list. She wanted to turn around and act like she was never there but she needed a gun. Knocking gently on the door not to startle him, she took a deep breath before speaking

“Morning” she said in a soft voice

Rick turned around and offered her a weak smile “Hey” he simply answered, then turned back to his occupation but obviously, he knew she wasn’t supposed to be there “What are you doing
“I…wanted to do the same as you” she said, pointing the weapons

“It’s not your shift” he replied. Sasha bit her lip, there seemed to be an ounce of reproach in his voice, as if he knew she was up to something. Or maybe it was only her being paranoid. She decided to come up with another idea

“Actually, Maggie sent me” she confessed. Rick turned away from his occupation and rose to her level

“Maggie?” he frowned “Is there something wro-“

“No, no, don’t worry. It’s just that she has been under pressure lately, we all have. She’s very tired and she had some unexpected stomach pains the past few days. So she wanted me to tell you that she won’t be out that much in the coming days, that’s all.”

“I see” he looked down “I hope it’s not too serious, do you think I need to go see her?”

“Oh no, no!” Sasha said with more infatuation then she had expected “No, really don’t trouble yourself, she just needs to rest for a while.” She assured him.

Rick eyed her curiously, she seemed agitated. They had known each other for some time now and he knew that when she was like that, something was probably up.

“You miss Gillian, huh?”

She suddenly searched his eyes, no, he didn’t know anything

“Of course I do. I can’t even begin to imagine what’s she’s going through out there” she said in an harsh tone “and I swear if that son of a bitch really touched her, I’m gonna kill him myself!” she roared with fury.

Lately that was all she had been thinking about. The thought of her friend surrounded by people who were not so different from Negan made her stomach turn. Although she knew Gillian was
one of the most resourceful person on earth, she wasn’t reassured at all. There wasn’t much she could do against an army.

“You aren’t gonna do anything rash, are you?” Rick asked, a little worried. It wouldn’t be the first time Sasha played the lone wolf on some insane rescue mission.

“What can I do? You saw how many they were when they caught us, and that wasn’t even the all of them.” She was talking to herself more than she was talking to Rick, there were still some unanswered questions as to how she was really going to pull this off. She cleared her throat, suddenly wanting to escape this conversation. Lying to Rick really wasn’t something she liked doing.

“I’ll leave you to it then” she smiled “I’ll see you around”

“Sure”. He watched her leave, not exactly convinced by her words but what else could he do.

Exiting the armory, Sasha was already cursing. As they had talked she had inspected the weapons very carefully and the truth was, there wasn’t enough for her to steal one unnoticed. They couldn’t know what she was up to, for their safety.

She would have to be invisible to the Saviors too, that meant no killings and total discretion. In the end, her knife would do the trick, as a last resort. Now there was another problem: finding the Sanctuary.

The few cars they had left were short on fuel, it had to be saved for the car she would bring to Gillian. That left her one choice, she had to be with the Saviors, in the same vehicle. Luckily for her, the trucks were big enough to hide in and with a few stacked crates it would be easier for her to lurk. Yes, that sounded like the right plan. The only plan actually.

The week was going to be long, and the wait would be even worse. She had never thought she would say that one day but right now, she couldn’t wait for the Saviors to come back.

At the Sanctuary

Waking up had never been so hard for Gillian. She had earned a good headache from yesterday’s drinking. Indeed, after leaving the infirmary, Carson and her had gone to the main hall to grab some food. They had talked a lot, about plenty of things. When he had questioned her about her wedding ring she had recounted him the story of her late husband. He had listened to her quietly,
focused. He found that when she spoke, not only could you not interrupt, but you didn’t want to either. The hindsight this woman had, the distance she could put between her and those terrible events was incredible and distressing at the same time. It seemed like she wanted to keep it all inside, to show nothing of her pain. She was brave beyond measure, he had thought, but there was always a breaking point for everyone. He feared that it would happen to her sooner or later and he knew it was often a long and difficult journey to come back from.

He had grown very attached to her and didn’t want to see her collapse under her burdens. Every time he looked at her she was helping people, caring for them without even knowing them. This was her cure, supporting others because she was unable to support herself, she was too broken for that, unfixable, as if along her descent she had been shaped for this new world.

The only thing he could do was to lighten her burden, but not much more, and that killed him. Not just because he admired her but because she was a good person, who deserved happiness above anyone else.

As the evening went by and the night started to come out, the both of them feeling a little tired, they had decided to open some bottles. They drank and talked, talked and drank, laughed, Gillian had the memory of a very good night, one she had missed for a long time now. But there was the damn headache, she had lost the habit of drinking that much and her body didn’t hesitate to make her feel it.

She turned the shower tap to ice cold and battled to stay under it as long as she could.

When she could actually feel herself thinking she decided to step out of the shower. She put her khaki cargo pants on, a clean white shirt and her military vest and walked directly to the infirmary. The shower had been fruitful but some aspirin would comfort her a little more.

The door was opened and Carson was standing over the counter, writing on a notebook. It occurred to her that he was alone most of the time, in this room. Sometimes he had some patients but that wasn’t often. Maybe he enjoyed the silence, the peace, she thought. Broken and injured people came to see him, he fixed them, he saw gruesome injuries, badly affected minds and plenty of other things. She suspected it was well enough for him, he didn’t need to see the horrors outside as well.

Knocking softly on the door, she took the liberty to step in before he even had the time to answer. He wouldn’t mind. Has she had expected, he seemed to have no aftermaths from yesterday’s little drinking session, not one bit of it. *The bastard!* She thought inwardly.

On his side, Carson thought he knew exactly why she had come here this morning. He genuinely smiled at his feet, trying to hold back a light chuckle and then lifted his head again.

‘*Aspirin?*’ he suggested more than he asked and she pouted her lips
“Yes. Are you reading my mind now?” The doctor let out a throaty laugh and shook his head

“’No, but I can see your face now, and it says quite a lot!’”

While he grabbed the medicines, she poured herself a large glass of water. She swallowed the pill and downed the glass just as fast.

“Had been a long time?” He asked, although the answer was quite obvious

“Definitely” she agreed, wiping her mouth with her sleeve.

“I probably shouldn’t have let you take that much” he regretted

“No, not at all, I had a good time, really. It’s a privilege to loosen up these days so I’ll take that.”

She patted him on the shoulder and excused herself, saying she had missed at least an hour of work this morning.

She found Arat walking around the Sanctuary for her shift. Everyone was already at their respective post. As soon as she saw Gillian arrive, Arat stopped walking, hanged her rifle on her shoulder and crossed her arms high above her chest angrily. She was obviously overacting but Gillian had promised she would walk with her this morning and she had been waiting for more than an hour.

“I don’t wanna hear it, girl” Arat growled “Get your ass right there and we’re off.” Gillian did as she was told but couldn’t contain a smile.

Every corner of the place was inspected, every corridor, Arat even took her in some places she didn’t even know existed. That left them plenty of time to talk. Negan, Jared’s suspicious death, the loss of Nigel, every topic was addressed and debated over. Right until Arat evoked the ride to Alexandria. They both remembered the little favor Gillian had asked of her. Thinking back she realized how bold this move had been. She had barely arrived to the Sanctuary, she and Arat were getting along well but the latter was still loyal to Negan.

“I gave the note to Sasha, just like you said.” Gillian took Arat’s hand in hers, looking her right in
‘I know you put your ass on the line for this and I can’t thank you enough for it’ she squeezed harder on the hand ‘I’ll make it up to you, I promise.’

Arat nodded silently, curling the side of her mouth in acknowledgment. As she had told Sasha, she hadn’t read the paper. The possibility that Gillian wanted to hurt anyone, even in the Sanctuary, was improbable to say the least. But still, Arat hoped she wouldn’t regret it.

They had been walking for almost two hours now, it was needless to say they had stopped a few times to argue or say hello to some workers. Overall it was a nice shift.

The were now back at the main entry, where the number of people working had increased significantly. Almost half of the population of the Sanctuary was there, busting their asses off for - very probably - the only man they hadn’t walked across today.

Both their bellies were craving for food now, mid day was long past so they decided to go get a quick snack before doing whatever they were supposed to do. They hadn’t even entered the building yet when a shrill female scream rose a few feet away.

‘Where’s that whore !!? Where is she you bunch of fucking traitors ?!’ Karen was walking promptly, obviously pissed with something, or someone apparently. She ran her eyes over the place frantically, as if looking for that particular someone.

‘I swear if she’s not here in ten seconds I’m gonna-’ Suddenly, she stopped short. Her eyes had found what she had been looking for. Gillian. A fiendish grin formed on her features, it was actually pretty scary. Karen was now walking slowly towards her prey, laughing internally as she thought about what she was going to do to her.

Seeing that trouble was brewing, Arat whispered to Gillian

‘Oh, god, she’s completely drunk’ that became routine around here, Gillian thought ‘and there’s probably more than alcohol behind this’ Arat added upset ‘I’ll better go get Negan, he’s the only one who can talk to her when she’s like that.’ And with that, she was gone, running towards her leader’s quarters, leaving Gillian to deal with the Sanctuary’s shit. Again.

Karen was still walking towards her but she didn’t know what she wanted from her. Drunk people couldn’t be reasoned or rational so she thought very carefully of how she was going to address her
“Hey, Karen” she cleared her throat, slightly raising her hands before her to show she was unarmed “why don’t you tell me what the problem is, huh, so we can sort this out. What do you say ?”

Karen smirked “What do you say ?” she tried to imitate her “The problem is you, you lying bitch. Tell me, how many times have you fucked him? Just so I know if it fits the number of times he turned me down lately.” Gillian’s stomach tightened, what on earth what she on about. Plus the amount of people watching the scene was not helping at all.

“What ?” She hadn’t been that confused in a very long time „Karen, what the hell are you talking about ?” She asked dead serious.

The addressee let out a full lung laugh “Oh my god, playing prude, are we. You’re worse than I thought. You think I’m stupid, that I’m blind, girl ? You think I don’t notice when he visits you in your room, more precisely to give you your belt back ?!” Oh god, Gillian thought, letting her head fall back in irritation. For one she didn’t appreciate her displaying false allegations in public and second, Karen was one of Negan’s wives, so why the hell should this trouble her if it was true ? Obviously, she wasn’t going to get any answers now.

As calm and patient as she could be, there was one thing that could annoy her in an instant: useless boring fucking problems that shouldn’t even be problems.

“I don’t know what you’ve heard, what you saw, but what you’re implying simply didn’t happen.” Gillian emphasized each of her last words but it didn’t seem to have any impact on Karen.

“Keep denying, go ahead. Your little tricks might work with everybody else” she threw hard glances around her “but not with me. I know what kind of woman you are”

“Oh, give me a break” Gillian breathed with disdain. Suddenly, Karen’s anger seemed to have kicked up a notch. Her fists were clenched, her jaw tightened and her eyes were red.

Negan and Arat had arrived and the scene before them seemed to announce some kind of fight. The Savior’s leader made his way closer to the action, pushing his people aside, closely followed by Arat.

Even in that context, he was happy to see Gillian. She looked unusually tensed, he thought, and then understood why as Karen drew a hidden knife from behind her back. The circle that had formed around the two women stepped back in one motion, not wanting to be hit by a clumsy move.
Even though he suspected that it wouldn’t have much impact, Negan tried to reason Karen

“Karen, darlin’, it’s your man talking” she suddenly looked up and smiled at him stupidly “why don’t you put the knife down so we can talk about this. There’s clearly a misunderstanding here.” He said and Karen’s smile disappeared as quick as it has showed up.

She couldn’t believe he was playing with her too. A shot of adrenaline ran through her body and all of a sudden, she threw herself at Gillian, knife drawn. Negan’s breath stopped as he thought she had been stabbed. The tension eased as he saw she actually had blocked Karen’s hand under her arm, leaving her powerless. That’s my girl, he thought. But it was also obvious to him that this wasn’t going to end well for one of them.

“Arat, go get Carson, just in case. I have a bad feeling about this” he said, hoping that Carson’s presence was indeed going to be ‘just in case’.

With force, Gillian pushed Karen back, letting her a chance to walk away from this but the other woman was stubborn, tanks to the drinking. She stabilized herself and charged her opponent again. Grateful for her agility, Gillian dodged her attacks without much effort. Karen’s movements were slow and clumsy but Gillian started to wonder how long this was going to last. At some point she would have to do something else than just defend.

Carefully scanning Karen’s movements, she waited for her to attack again. As the latter engaged, Gillian dodged again, stood steady on her legs and delivered a nice lateral punch right in Karen’s face.

A few reaction rose from the watching crowd, Negan among them. Karen fell down, the hit had been rather violent and she was feeling dizzy.

“You are so fucking dead, you fucking bitch !!” She screamed out of rage, getting back up again and desperately running towards Gillian.

This was the right time, Gillian thought. She caught her arm as it neared her face, just like before, put her own weight back and rolled backwards, dragging Karen in her calculated fall. In a second, Karen found herself face in the dirt with Gillian on top of her and her arms held high behind her back, hurting her just enough to stop her from wriggling.

Negan didn’t waste a second there
“Take her back to her quarters, make sure she’s not alone”. Karen was brought back upstairs with Carson. He would have the difficult or even impossible task to talk to her and cool down the effect of the alcohol and apparently the present drugs in her body.

Slowly, the little crowd was dismissed and people went back to their occupation. Getting up seemed like an excruciating move at the moment so Gillian remained on the ground for a few minutes. The light headache had been the one to beat her down. Everyday was a damn test at the Sanctuary, she would have to accept that. She was doing good so far, Negan thought as he approached her. Her breath had slowed down a little but she was still too tired to get up so he was the one to crouch down beside her.

“Enjoyed the show ?” She asked with a half-smile. He was glad she didn’t sound too angry.

“Almost” he offered her a self-satisfied grin. “Thank you for leaving her in one piece”

She rose her eyebrows “You were worried I wouldn’t ?” This sounded more like a reproach than a question

“No” he replied calmly but firmly “I said I was thankful, that’s all. You never answered her question by the way…” he waited for her to understand.

“What question ?” She eyed him curiously.

He hesitated but then just couldn’t resist “How many times have we fucked, Sweetheart ?”

Her eyes almost rolled out of their sockets. This man was unbelievable, a disciple of Satan and a fucking child on top of that. That was a lot to carry but the first concerned didn’t seem to have a care in the world.

“You asshole ! Don’t even mention that, for God’s sake ! People would start believing that it’s true.”

“Well, maybe it will come true…” he suggested.

“Yeah, sure”
“Oh, what did I hear?” His eyes were shining now, she simply rolled her eyes.

“Ever heard of sarcasm?”

“I’ll keep hoping, then. I’m a believer.” He said as he rose. “Need some help to get up, Sweetheart?” He proposed

“No, I’m gonna rest here for a little while” it was his turn to frown

“For real?”

“For real, don’t worry I’m good” she assured him so he didn’t push, thanked her again and took his leave.

In her rooms, Karen was sitting next to Carson, holding some ice to her temple, trembling and crying. The doctor had tried to comfort her, he really had, but she was inconsolable.

She told him how ridiculous she felt, how small. Ever since Gillian arrived she had felt invisible to Negan, he barely looked at her, or so she thought, actually he had significantly spent less time with his wives lately, almost never visited at all. It seemed that every time she saw him, he was talking to her, watching her or searching for her. Karen felt like she had lost her purpose in life, as if she had no reason to be here anymore. She had sacrificed a lot to be there, lots of parts of herself. And now it hurt to imagine she had done all of that for nothing.
Chapter 12

Chapter Twelve

‘‘I could kiss you now, Sweetheart. If you weren’t you and I wasn’t me, right now, at this very moment.’’ His eyes roll at the back of his head as he breaths in her scent. His mouth is inches apart from hers and surprisingly, she is not trying to flee. He can’t quite remember how they both got here, alone and in each other’s arms but he knows this is real. He couldn’t mistake this for a dream or some work from his imagination. He pulls back a little, just enough to look at her again, reaches in those burning pupils of hers - and yes, they are burning - and finds the strength to finally take her head gently in his hands. He swears he can almost hear her heart beating from there…excitement or fear? He leans in, closing the distance between their heated bodies, closing in, closing in…and…

____________________________________________________________

In Alexandria

It had been more than exactly a week since Sasha had received Gillian’s note. She had been preparing all this time and today was the day. In a few minutes, the Saviors would be here to take half of everything they had, food, medicines and pretty much everything else.

She didn’t have much to do in the plan in the end, ‘‘just’’ get in one of the trucks without being seen, remember the itinerary and get out before entering the Sanctuary. Easier said than done but she was determined.

As expected, roaring engines approached the gates of Alexandria. They opened and no less than three trucks came in. The first one to enter would be the last one to leave, Sasha figured, the one she would get in.

After a few minutes, the truck was halfway full, now was the time to make her move. She got a little closer, checked her surroundings. No one. She counted in her head 1, 2, 3 and ran quietly to the truck. She almost had a heart attack when she saw two Saviors coming back

‘‘Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck!’’ She whispered, there was no wall nearby, no corner to hide in. She did the first thing that passed thought her mind and threw herself under the truck.

She covered her mouth with her hand and watched the Saviors legs move around the truck. Each
second felt like hours.

Finally they walked away and she was free to go. Pushing the crates aside, she made herself some room to settle. She didn’t know how far the Sanctuary was or when they were going to leave. She made sure to be perfectly hid by the crates and boxes, sat down and waited, waited and waited again.

Later, it was the sound of a starting engine that woke her up from her nap. She hadn’t even noticed she had fallen asleep waiting for them. Damn girl, focus on the damn mission she cursed herself. The trucks started to roll, this was it, she realized she was really doing this. Before, the adrenaline permitted her to get on the truck without really thinking but now she was in, no turning back. They had left the back of the truck open as she knew they would. They were so confident that they had grown careless, all for the better for Sasha.

She made her way through the supplies again, grabbing some chips while she was at it. After all, they were Alexandria’s.

She recognized the road they were on, she had taken it before. She wrote it down on the little paper Arat gave her and continued to do so each time they took a new road.

After a few minutes, Sasha decided to take a look at what was going on at the front. There was no one on the road so it was very improbable that the driver would use his mirrors. However if he did, well she was completely screwed.

She held on tight on the wall of the truck and twisted her head to watch ahead. Luckily for her he wasn’t looking. That’s when she saw it, a giant factory rising from the trees. The Sanctuary. She had imagined that Negan’s place was big but damn, that was fucking gigantic. So gigantic and impressive that she almost forgot to jump out of the truck before it was to late. She rolled to the side of the road, out of sight and that was it.

Well that wasn’t so terrible she thought to herself and smirked. Meters from here, her friend was waiting, she was alive, probably not well but Sasha was here to remedy that. Together they would find a way to get her out, she would bring her back safe and sound to Alexandria and Negan and his Saviors would be taken care of.

Sasha felt a wave of hope crossing though her, she felt like she could accomplish anything. She was determined to change things now and she would but first…well first she had to walk all the way back to Alexandria. Once she realized that, the wave of hope kind of disappeared.

“You have to be fucking kidding me” she breathed and laughed at the ridiculousness of the scene before getting on her way.

At the Sanctuary
Negan had quite some work to do today, in his words anyway. The trucks had just arrived, fully loaded with his supplies. He smiled when he saw all the content, Alexandria was his special prize, it had been the toughest community to get to kneel for him. Also it was the one who had caused the most damage to the Sanctuary. Negan hadn’t forgotten their vicious attack against one of his outposts, it had been a real mess.

He ordered his men to unload the trucks and as usual left the rest of the work to them. Today he felt good enough to inspect the worker’s work by himself, which was a rare thing.

When he walked by they all kneeled, when he talked to them they bowed their heads and when he ordered they obeyed without question. That was a very good day indeed. Little did he know that it would turn out to be just the opposite very shortly.

The day went by normally, no bad surprises, no fuck ups, no problems. That is what he was living for, how he wanted things to be: in order. When he thought today couldn’t be any more perfect, the highlight among highlights showed up, working with a few others in a remote area of the Sanctuary. She was nowhere to be found earlier, he supposed she had been resting.

“Well hello there, Sweetheart” he said from behind her, startling her on purpose. Her shoulders jerked up and he smirked

“I’m never gonna get rid of you, am I’ she asked ironically

“Nope, not unless you try but that is very, completely, extremely ill advised” he winked “What I’d give to see you try though !”

“Careful what you wish for…” she said suggestively and his gaze brightened suddenly

“Holy balls, Sweetheart, you’re really starting to arouse my fucking curiosity” he said, emphasizing one particular word. “You shouldn’t be working you know that ?” He said more seriously “You have the right to take some time off, you’re not a worker, you’re with me remember”

“Yes, I know, but I need to do this, it clears my head, helps me keep things straight, you know” she said and he nodded, fully understanding and respecting that.

“Just know that if you need some time off you can have it, you have to focus on the supply runs and as it happens…as it-” he suddenly stopped speaking but she couldn’t see what was going on
as she was working the crops

"As it happens?" She asked. No answer "Negan?" Still nothing

"What the f..." he said which made her turn around quickly "Get her down for fuck’s sake! How the fuck did nobody see her?!" He screamed out of rage and panic, running inside and upstairs. Gillian hadn’t seen what was going on exactly but when she did, her stomach turned furiously. From one of the windows of the factory, Karen’s limp body was hanging by the neck. She followed Negan and some others inside to retrieve Karen’s body, hopefully still alive.

With the help of his workers, Negan pulled on the rope, managed to grab her body and free Karen from the rope. He then carried her all the way to the infirmary, Gillian running before him to clear the way. Carson rapidly understood this was an emergency but as soon as Karen’s body was laid on the table, he knew he didn’t need to check any pulse to know that she was long dead. He did it anyway, because Negan was here. He waited a few seconds and lifted his eyes to Negan’s, biting his lower lip.

"I’m sorry-" he started and was immediately interrupted by Negan throwing a chair that went flying to the opposite side of the room.

"Fuck!" He shouted angrily before kicking the door violently and leaving.

Gillian and Carson exchanged glares and remained silent. The doctor had never seen him like this. It was the accumulation of deaths, the lack of control he had over it. Karen had been the breaking point for him. That was too much after Tom, Jared and Nigel. Negan couldn’t be blamed for that.

After having cleaned the body, Gillian wondered if it was good to leave Negan alone after this

"Do you think I should go talk to him? Or you? He always listens to you" she suggested but Carson’s face didn’t seem to go along with this idea.

"I don’t know, Gillian, for all I know he’s probably trashing his room, dead drunk and throwing shits around. I don’t think it’s safe to go." He said honestly

"And it’s better to just leave him like this? Alone?" She countered unconvinced. Carson knew she had somewhat already made up her mind and knew that if she had, it would be useless to try to make her change her mind. He just found unfair that she was always the one to clean up and
take care of everybody’s shit. He surrendered

“All right, go talk to him, he will listen to you and I don’t think he would harm you” harm me? Gillian thought...”but promise me that if he gets violent you’ll just walk away” he asked and she could only agree. “Okay go then, and be careful”.

Gillian thanked him and made her way towards his quarters, multiple scenarios playing in her head as to what she was going to find there. Finally she arrived before his large door.

She knocked hesitantly. No answer, just the sound of a breaking glass. Shit she muttered to herself. She knocked harder

“It’s open but go the fuck away!” Negan’s voice barked from behind the door. Drunk it is she confirmed.

Her curiosity taking the upper hand, Gillian opened it and took one step inside the dark room. Even with the light from the corridor she couldn’t quite make out her surroundings. She could only tell that music was playing from the opposite side of the room. It was Negan’s room obviously but her eyes had a hard time adjusting. Finally, after a few seconds she discerned his silhouette sprawled on a big comfortable armchair.

“Oh, it’s you” he said and smiled weakly. His mood was as shitty as it gets but seeing her always seemed to appease him. In the beginning he told himself that it would pass, that he would grow tired of her, just like he got tired of his wives. Use it and toss it, that was how he had been living lately, but Gillian certainly wasn’t someone you could toss, he knew that all too well.

She turned the nearest light on, it wasn’t very bright but it was enough. Negan flinched, blinking repeatedly. Wether it was the booze or the light he didn’t really know. He stretched his long legs and leaned forward, forearms on his legs. As he looked around he noticed the glass he had thrown a few seconds ago. He smirked

“Oops, broke the glass”.

“I know” Gillian spoke slowly and clearly, making sure he would understand as he clearly had had a lot to drink “I heard”. She crossed her arms, wondering if she should help him sober up. Did he even want to? Would he even accept? Who knows how a man like Negan could behave when in this state...

“How much have you had tonight?” She asked, pointing the broken glass. Negan scratched the back of his head, thinking. There wasn’t much to think about. He shrugged.
‘I los’ count, Sweetheart.’” He admitted like a little boy who was being punished. He seemed so vulnerable, Gillian thought, so open and naive. If she wanted she could crack open his shell right here and now, make him confess anything. ‘T’ was my favourite glass… I think. And now it’s fucking gone. Like her. I threw them away and now they’re both gone.’” He tightened his fists in anger. ‘Like Nigel, Tom…and Jared.” He fell back in the armchair “I never wanted that to happen, you know that, huh ? Don’t you know that ?”

‘Yes, yes. Hey you need to calm down’” Gillian approached him and crouched down next to him. She scanned the room and found the sink. ‘You need water” she said as she went to pour him a large glass. “Here, and you drink it all” she said like a mother would say to her child.

Negan did as he was told, downing the glass all at once. His inner self somehow knew how he must look like to her now, exposed and defenceless. But instead of wanting to hide it, he felt that he could trust her with this and let go for once. Let someone else take charge. When was the last time he had someone give him an order, let alone accept it? Years ago? Decades? Leading was a very testing job, of course you had the good sides, there were many in his case, but for the rest, you were the one responsible, the one to blame. Negan was supposed to be the one to answer to the deaths of his dead people and where was he now? Dead drunk, hiding in his quarters. But no one could see him now, except her, he felt that just for once he could put his job on hold, if only for a few hours.

Gillian had been watching him as he was thinking, he was different when he felt he could be. Had his mask fell ? She couldn’t really tell. She had her little underground world too, her haven behind which she hid everyday to survive. She wondered how it was like to lead and command people in times like this. Seeing this man before her now comforted her in the idea that she never wanted to lead. No, she was good where she was, a silent counsellor, who did her little things for her and others but didn’t have the responsibility to ask people to go to war, to give their life for the cause. She often asked herself if this was selfish of her, refusing to lead by fear of failing people. She hadn’t found her answer yet.

As her eyes went up to his she realized he too had been watching her intensely. His repetitive blinks reminded her his actual state so she quickly got up to refill his glass.

‘I’m gonna get you something from Carson, okay ?’” She proposed but he started shaking his head silently, which she didn’t see. She gave him the glass again and started to leave

‘I’ll be back in a minute, just drink your water and-’”

‘No, no, no, don’t go, Gil’ ” he said almost in panic as he tried unsuccessfully to get up from the armchair. He cursed. ‘Don’t go to Carson,…please ?’” She frowned, what the hell was he on about again.
“Negan you need to take something. Water is good but it’s not going to do anything more than keep you hydrated. I said I’ll be back in a second, okay.”

“Are you a thing? You two?” He asked and looked away, as if he was afraid to hear the answer. This honest question made it clear to her that he really was jealous. When he had asked that for the first time a few days ago she had thought he was just being childish but no.

“No we’re not a thing, why would you think that?” She asked turning back to him and he shrugged as if it was obvious.

“Well I don’t know you two do spend a lot of time together, when I see you you’re laughing and he is always happy after you paid him a visit” Negan said, still not looking at her.

“Can’t we just be friends? I mean yeah, we talk to each other a lot but it’s not like I have a ton of friends around here” she replied honestly and he had to admit she had a point.

A little voice in his head asked him what the hell he was doing, clearly he was opening himself to her and something told him that maybe it was a mistake. Only, he felt good right now, with her, no one to bother them at this time of night. Of course he wasn’t going to ask her anything special, he just wanted to enjoy her company, he needed it. The room was very silent, except for the song coming from the turntable. Actually it was just ending and a new one started, Gillian thought she recognized it. She spoke again, suddenly pulling him out from his thoughts.

“I’m going to get that aspirin now” she said but he called her back.

“Wait” he extended his hand to her “Can you huh, help me up, please?” He asked almost shyly. Was he really so drunk that he couldn’t even get up? What was he up to again? Gillian thought but helped him anyway. She grabbed his forearm and he grabbed hers, she pulled him towards her and they found each other face to face. Had he planned this? Gillian asked herself. No, impossible, not in his state. He was just living the moment, there was no way he had thought about his next moves she decided. But they were really there, inches apart and scanning each other.

Negan closed his eyes slowly, enjoying the music that was playing and humming the melody.

“Know this song, mmmh?” He asked and she could smell the alcohol all over him. Scotch more precisely, how original. She then focused on the song, she knew the singer’s voice from
somewhere, she was certain of it.

*We sails through endless skies*

*Stars shine like eyes*

*The blacklight sighs*

“I…” she thought again, scratching her head “Is it Planet Caravan?” She asked hesitantly, as if someone was going to punish her if that was the wrong answer. He offered her a large smile

“Very nice, Gillian, good to know someone knows her classics” he winked, well he tried to anyway.

He was still holding onto her forearm, she didn’t know if he really needed it to keep his balance or if he simply wanted to hold her. He was staring at her now, with his unsteady eyes, his wondering face. Then, his hand slid down into hers, squeezed it, not too hard and he brought it up to his shoulder. He hesitated a few seconds and finally decided to put his hand on her waist. Gillian could feel the heat radiating from his body. A real change for her who was always cold.

*The moon, in silver dreams*

*Pours down in beams*

*Light of the night*

“*Ever danced with the devil in the pale moonlight?”* He asked, and she couldn’t help but smile at the reference. She was surprised as well that he was able to remember it. God, it had been so long since she had seen a movie. She decided to go along with him and took his free hand in hers.

“Seems like someone knows his classics too.” She said as she tried to take in the rhythm of the song. “*Can you lead?”* She asked and he rose his eyebrows, acting offended

“*My, my, Sweetheart”* his voice was deeper than ever, “*you underestimate my…abilities”* he pressed her further into his body, eliciting a small noise from her. That was unexpected but he enjoyed it beyond words. He then started to lead the dance, as promised.

*The earth, a purple blaze*
Of sapphire haze

In orbit always

Gillian thought he was actually pretty good, strong enough but never pushy. She let herself be guided by him, their little dance was nothing extravagant, a simple slow, but it still required some moves. She didn’t know for him but she hadn’t danced for ages, not that she didn’t like it, she used to be pretty good in high school but that was probably the last time she had ever danced. She then remembered the army’s annual ball, yes that must have been the last time, it seemed so far away. And she hadn’t heard any music for a long time either, today this was luxury, hell almost impossible.

Gillian was trying not to look in his eyes, the moment sure was a little awkward for her. Just how conscious was he? Would he even remember this encounter tomorrow morning. She absolutely had no clue, the only thing she was sure about was that he was enjoying himself right now.

Negan was watching her intently, he wanted her to look at him, to see another connection between them. He could feel that she was tensed through the fabric of her clothes. If only he could get rid of those and just…He knew he would never do that, not in a million years and especially not now, in his state he couldn’t even begin to imagine how awful it would be for her. For now he simply savoured the feel of her under his palm, venturing a little further down when he felt daring enough and then coming back up again.

While down below the trees
Bathed in cool breeze
Silver starlight
Breaks dawn from night

At some point Negan found the dance a little too monotonous for his taste. He pushed her back, not letting go of her hand and twirled her around once, twice and then one more time before reuniting with her, her back against his chest. This was just as hard for her as it was for him. He was only a man after all. Her frame was perfectly moulded to his, painfully so.

The only reason he was able to control himself was because he didn’t have all the control. He and the scotch held a little part of it and Gillian held the rest. She could have asked him anything, anything at all and he would have done it without thinking.

He tried to focus on the dance, on the way she was responding to his wiggling hips behind her. He had both his hands holding her hips, his mouth just next to her ear. There was so many things he wanted to say to her, to ask from her.
Rather unexpectedly, she covered his hands with hers, making his fingers dig deeper in her skin and he swore she bucked against him which made something twitch inside him. Neither of them knew where this was going or when it was going to stop.

Gillian’s throat was dry, she was desperately trying not to shiver too much. It’s not that she was uncomfortable, on the contrary she rather enjoyed the closeness but she had been away from it for so long that she didn’t know how to handle it again. Also, there was this little voice at the back of her head telling her that this was Negan, that maybe this wasn’t such a good idea given the man.

*And so we pass on by*

*The crimson eye*

*Of great god Mars*

*As we travel the universe*

He twirled her around again so that she was facing him and they resumed their dancing.

Their eyes met, Gillian was thankful for the dim lights, she couldn’t quite see his pupils and he couldn’t see hers. Yet they were watching each other, wondering what the other was thinking, what his next move would be. She was surprised of his silence, Negan was usually the big talker, always trying to make her uncomfortable but he had been quiet during practically the entire song.

The music started to fade away slowly and soon, the room was plunged in complete silence. They could mutually hear their breaths, feel the tension in each other’s bodies and this feeling was overwhelming. Gillian thought she was going to collapse if they stayed like this too long. Negan on the other hand, felt like he could just watch her endlessly. It was a strange feeling for him too because it felt new. Taking the time to appreciated someone, he had completely lost the habit of it, and it felt so good, exhilarating.

He then leaned into her, burying his face in the crook of her neck. Gillian could feel his hot breath against her skin and shivered. He was literally breathing her, printing her sent all over his senses so that he would not forget it any time soon, hopefully never.

When he pulled back his eyes were glimmering with something that scared her and fascinated her at the same time.

“I could kiss you now, Sweetheart’’ he said, his voice breaking under the weight of his words, “‘if you weren’t you and I wasn’t me, right now, at this very moment.’’ His eyes rolled at the back of his head as he breathed in her scent again. His mouth was inches apart from hers and surprisingly, she didn’t try to flee. He couldn’t quite remember how they had both got here in the first place,
alone and in each other’s arms but he knew this was real.

He couldn’t mistake this for a dream or some work of his imagination. He pulled back a little, just enough to look at her again, reached in those burning pupils of hers - and yes, they were burning - and found the strength to finally take her head gently in his hands. He swore he could almost hear her heart beating from there…excitement or fear? He leaned in, closing the distance between their heated bodies, closing in, closing in…and…

“We shouldn’t right ?” He whispered against her lips, she didn’t dare move

“No… I think not” she said honestly, still not moving, waiting for him to pull back. And he did. It took him an impossible amount of strength to do it but he did. He actually believed it was the right thing to do. They were not ready and this wasn’t just about her and he knew it.

“I’ll be back with your pills’’ she simply said and he nodded silently. He retreated back into the armchair and she exited his rooms without another word.

As soon as she was out, she rested against the nearest wall, taking deep breaths and waiting for her heart to slow down. She felt like she a just ran a damn marathon. But no, no she had just danced with goddamn Negan and it made her feel all funny. She hated this.

She started to make her way to the infirmary but suddenly stopped, remembering a little something she had to do, something she had been secretly doing for days after a few tactical spotting sessions. She approached the nearest window, checked outside. The area was clear. She ran down the stairs, walked past Carson’s closed door and quickly found herself in the parking lot. As she knew, the guard was never here at this hour, she didn’t know where he was either but that didn’t really matter, as long as he was somewhere else.

Every building, every prison could be breached and in a matter of seconds, like a shadow in the night, Gillian was out of the Sanctuary.

Chapter End Notes

O right so you'll see that I borrowed the Sasha-in-the-truck idea from the show, where it's actually Jesus and Carl who work this little scheme so the general idea is not mine. Also the "Ever danced with the devil in the pale moonlight ?” bit is taken from a line of the Joker in the Batman comics, I thought it suited the situation perfectly ! I you are wondering, the song "playing as Gillian and Negan are dancing is Planet Caravan from Black Sabbath, I invite you to listen to it, it's just brilliant ;)
PS: Wishing you all a merry Christmas and happy new year (a little in advance^^), thanks for reading again!
The sound of the wind, the feel of a flower against her hand along with the countless sounds of the night, often mysterious and misleading. She had that, even when she was a prisoner of the Sanctuary, but now was different. Nobody knew she was there, at least she hoped so. No, she had checked everywhere, planned everything. According to her calculations, she had at least ten minutes in the wild starting now. If she had big plans that would have been quite enjoyable… Unfortunately her only mission now was to see if Sasha had managed to bring a car around. There was no specific location, she’d have to look around and do a little digging here and there. The options for hiding a car fortunately weren’t that numerous, the thing was to hide it just enough so that the person who knew something had to be searched could see it without having to play detective for two hours.

Soon, five minutes had gone by, then six, seven and still no car. *Come on Sasha, come on* Gillian spoke to herself, encouraging fate *where did you leave it, come on* she repeated, hoping from some kind of response from…somewhere or someone. Of course there was no help to be found, not tonight anyway.

Gillian decided to call it a night, it occurred to her that Sasha simply hadn’t have the time to bring up the vehicle. However she decided to enjoy her last minutes a freedom. She thought and realised that she didn’t know what to do once she had the car. She would go to Alexandria, of course, but to do what? Staying and hiding was out of the question, it would be easy for Negan to understand were she had headed. Also, she felt like a sort of trust had planted his seed between them, and not just him, there was Arat, Carson and many others. As far as she knew they were "good" people, not that it was easy to say in this context. People had become survivors and it was not always easy to judge. Having said that, she would still admit she had found Alexandrians’ first encounter with the Saviors rather violent, both physically and emotionally. At night sometimes she thought about it, about what the people of the Hilltop had said, what the Saviors had done to one of them. Just a kid, she knew that, but having spent around two weeks in the Sanctuary she simply couldn’t bring herself to hate them for that. Was she missing something? Had they suddenly become reasonable? So many questions and too little answers once again.

The sound of something coming close pulled her out of her thoughts, she reached towards her belt to grab her knife and *shit*, she didn’t have it. It was a roamer. Running away could turn out to be a risky solution, she could be heard and caught easily.

The floor was filled with branches so she got creative.

“Late night walk, huh?” The fact that she was literally talking to him,…it?—No that was a she
actually, didn’t seem to bother her the slightest.

“Well it seems you and I had the same idea.”

Measuring her steps, Gillian was carefully, almost gently pushing the roamer back with the branche. She repeated the process until she had her pinned against a tree.

"I’m gonna have to apologize for this" she warned before piercing through the roamer’s chest until the stick hit the tronc of the tree.

The dead woman was reaching with her arms desperately, mouth wide open and ready to bite anything that would have the misfortune of finding itself between those teeth. So much greed, a vital need and yet the eyes never showed anything, they never did.

In the end, they weren’t so different…they simply lacked moral and will, that was all that separated them, and that wasn’t much to say the least. Gillian never knew how to feel about this and in a way, maybe asking too many questions was not the best idea.

Throwing one last glance towards the starving creature, Gillian made her way back to the Sanctuary and in no more than two minutes, was knocking against Carson’s door. Again.

Usually, he would have greeted her from his chair where he spent most of his time writing medical rapports and personal notes, but as soon as he saw who it was, he got up in a flash and rushed towards her with a worried expression.

He eyed her curiously—well, scanned her would be a more accurate word—and finally spoke

"He didn’t do anything did he ?" He said as he tried to hide his trembling voice. He really had been worrying to death for the past thirty minutes. Ever since she had left this very room to follow a tremendously pissed, tired and on edge Negan he had been counting every passing second. To be true he hadn’t been able to focus on his work at all and had fought against the idea of checking on the both of them more than once. The reason behind what might be considered an overreaction was simple really, he had seen Negan like this, it was only once but it had been enough for him never to forget who Negan was, or at least who he could be under specific circumstances. Carson would barely admit it to himself but this day, he had seen a monster. Not a tortured, tormented monster, no, but the core of evil, a sadistic, psychotic monster. Even though this incident had never happened again—thank god for that—it was something he could never forget, no matter how hard he might try. However he didn’t want to forget, it was essential that he didn’t, this particular day was a constant reminder of Negan’s instable inner self. It was dangerous and it could surface at any time, Carson had seen it before with many people.

Gillian saw how worried he was, the fact that he cared like this touched her, he had no reason to do so, as far as she was concerned she was nothing less than an enemy.
"No, really I’m alright, and he’s…” she didn’t really know how to put it simply, Negan was after all a complex character, not to mention a hell of a drama queen "he drank a lot but he only hurt a glass that was passing by” she smiled and he let go of the breath he was holding.

The doctor was impressed, and relieved. Impressed because day after day, he realized what grip Gillian had on Negan. He suspected that even he probably wouldn’t have been able to reason with him today, especially when drunk.

"How is he now ?" Carson’s asked, his doctor side taking over

"I managed—we managed to cool him down a little…” she said, thinking of how weird it sounded but didn’t have any other words to explain. Gillian wasn’t the only one surprised by this vague statement, Carson rose his eyebrows questioningly. This situation reminded her when she had to explain to her parents where she had spent the night sometimes when she was younger.

"We danced…” it almost sounded like a question.

"You danced ?" Oh, look, another question to which she didn’t know what the fuck to answer…

"Yep." she bit her lower lip, though there was nothing exceptional about it. "He asked" she felt the need to add for some reasons. Carson didn’t hide his surprise, he didn’t even want to know how Negan was capable to dance at this stage, he let out a throaty chuckle, allowing Gillian to take a breath and accept that the situation wasn’t as bad as she thought. She laughed too.

"Actually I’m supposed to bring him some aspirin now" she added, almost forgetting why she was here in the first place.

"I’ll get you that" said Carson before searching quickly in his drawers. "There" he said, handing her the pills "I’m really glad you’re okay” he smiled. Gillian thanked him and walked back to upstairs.

Negan hadn’t turned up the light while she was gone but he wasn’t sitting in the armchair anymore. The young woman started cursing already, he could be anywhere for all she knew. The sound of running water coming from another room caught her attention.

Pills still firmly in hand, she knocked softly on the half-opened door and was greeted by an exhausted, growling voice.
"You can come in, I’m not undressed" he assured her. Not undressed? The water was running full force and he was not undressed? Gillian pushed the door slowly, a bit hesitant and found Negan sitting inside the shower, pants and white shirt on, boots and socks sitting in a corner of the bathroom.

"You took some time" he remarked but she ignored it purposefully

"What on earth are you doing like this?"

"It’s ice water, helps me cool down." Well that wasn’t completely idiotic Gillian thought, actually that’s exactly what he needed right now. She nodded.

"How long have you been in there?"

Negan closed his eyes, thinking "…about five minutes or so… I think"

"You should stop now, or you’ll catch a cold. It’s already freezing outside" she said innocently before instantly regretting it. Had she just given herself away?

"Outside?" Yes, she had "Why’d you need to go outside for? I thought you were just going to see Carson" Negan said suspiciously. It amazed her how aware and attentive he was after all the drinks she imagined he’d had. It seemed he could read her just as well as she could read him

"I was" Gillian replied almost too quickly, as she tried thinking about how to turn this conversation around "I just needed to walk a little, after the dance and all of that, you know.” Negan rose his wet eyebrows and reopened his eyes to fix her

"No, Gil’, I don’t know" he said dryly and Gillian was bracing herself for whatever was coming "What about the dance?" He simply asked and she found herself empty with answers.

What was she supposed to say to that? The truth? That she had actually enjoyed this moment? That it had made her feel uncomfortable and so good at the same time? Or worse, that she had liked much more than she should have the way he had moved his hips against her? No, no god damn way! Once again, she turned the attention on him.
"You should really turn the water off now." And it finally paid off, Negan lazily rose his arm above his head, searched for the knob and after fumbling with it for a few seconds finally succeeded to turn it off. Like some bad déjà-vu, he rose his puppy eyes to Gillian’s unreadable ones and softly, almost timidly asked

"Help me up ?"

"Are you gonna ask me to dance again ?" She replied a little more sharply than intended

"Would you like me to ?" He was teasing now. Gillian offered him an utterly uncontrolled genuine smile, it was enough to lighten his whole world, and without a word shoved the pills in her pocket and for the second time of the evening took Negan’s hands in hers. He was dripping wet from head to toe, and Gillian had to hold on really tight if she didn’t want him to slip and fall back down, but they managed.

It didn’t take Negan long to seriously start shaking under the cold air of the room, his wet clothes glued to his skin weren’t doing any good either. He was well aware of his now see through shirt which was more like a second skin now. It showed off his lean form, his strong and defined shoulders, the nice shape of his biceps but Gillian didn’t look slightly impressed.

"I should definitely—" he started

"Yeah, change your…” she motioned his entire form clumsily

"Yeah, my—"

"Clothes" they both concluded in unison "I’ll get you a glass of water for the aspirin" Gillian said while exiting—escaping the bathroom. It is not that she was afraid about the idea of seeing him half undressed, or completely naked for that matter, she just wanted to avoid what she knew was going to be an uncomfortable situation.

Negan followed closely behind her, directly heading to the bed room to find some fresh clothes. He came back shortly, shirt barely on and his wet hair were darker than ever.

He swallowed the pill, downed the water and they stood facing each other silently. It was rare but Negan found himself out of words, the after effects of the alcohol had a little to do with it but still.
It was obvious to him that she wasn’t going to fall in his arms anytime soon, she was too clever for that and maybe she truly wasn’t even interested—it would sort of hurt him if that really was the case. However tonight he had felt a strange connection, something new between them. When they had danced he had sensed he wasn’t the only one embracing the moment, like if they had found some comfort in each other’s arms. Sure, it was mostly him who had been seeking comfort tonight, he just couldn’t forget that she had not declined the invitation. Throughout the night this little detail had seemed so important at some point and sometimes he simply told himself that she was just being nice, because this was who she was. For the meantime, he would keep hoping for… Hoping for what by the way? A good night kiss? Another dance, perhaps? Or maybe he simply wanted her for one night, and all the nights to come, he was after all a selfish being.

He cleared his throat, his legs had become quite heavy and unsteady, and the desperate need to rest was slowly winning over him.

"It’s late, we probably should call it a night" oh, she had been waiting for him to say something like this during these last unsettling minutes where he had been focused on her and only her, with his absent gaze.

"Yeah, it’s getting quite late and I have work to do tomorrow"

Negan acted surprised "Do you?" He didn’t recall planning any runs for her

"There’s always work to be done, Negan" It sounded like a reproach and somehow she wanted it to sound that way. On this final note she bid him good night, no good night kiss, and took her leave to head towards her own rooms, which were surprisingly just behind the very next door of the corridor.

The door was barely closed but she started undressing and getting ready for her own shower. This had been a very long day, which had started perfectly well by the way, but the ending turned out to be a lot more theatrical then she would have imagined.

With the water she washed it all away, the weight of things, the deaths, the unwanted memories. However there was one problem she couldn’t seem to get rid of just now: herself. She thought about how open she had been with Negan today, how she had behaved, especially during the dance. Again it wasn’t the act itself that bothered her, she was a grown woman, free—well, not so much for the past two weeks or so—and single—always a very painful reminder for her—and if she felt like dancing with a man then by all means she could and would it. No, what bothered her was how fast this was going, how fast she had given into him. The last thing she wanted was for him to believe that there was something going on or possible between them because for now, this wasn’t the case.

Simply wrapping a towel around her body, she went directly to bed. Covers pulled up to her chin,
she tried to empty her mind and clear all the thoughts, unfortunately that was in the night that the mind decided to reflect on everything. Gillian didn’t find sleep until way past midnight and when she did, unpleasant dreams came filling her unconscious.

In the next room, Negan was fighting against the tiredness, unlike her he enjoyed having a flow of thoughts and questions in the night, when no one was going to interrupt or observe. He put his hands behind his head, closed his eyes and breathed slowly, then glanced at the window. The night was darker than usual, the moon barely visible, unlike the stars. For a second he thought about counting them all and then smirked at the ridiculous idea, he wasn’t thinking straight and before he could reflect on what was happening, a sudden need to throw up overtook him. Rushing to the bathroom he almost slipped on the water he had dragged along with him when he had exited the shower

"Jesus fuck!" He groaned before finally reaching the toilet and relieving himself. He choked a few times and wanting it to be done as quickly as possible, used his fingers to hit the back of his throat. The aftermath of drinking, he laughed and realized it hadn’t even made him feel better, Gillian had.

Exiting the room, Negan reached for the nearest drawer, found a pair of socks, put his boots on and decided he needed a bowl of fresh air. As he walked passed Gillian's door, he couldn’t help but lay his palm flat on it, imagining what she was doing. Little did he know—and thank god, for that— that she was merely covered by the bed sheets, the towel having long slept from her form in her sleep, leaving her bare under the covers.

He resumed his progression and ended up on the parking lot. To his genuine surprise he found he was not alone. He approached the man sitting on the front stairs.

"Late night out, C?"

"Mmh mmh" the doctor barely answered. Negan took a seat near him "I figured you’d come here"

"Really?"

Carson eyed him in a funny way "You’re a very predictable man, Negan, once we get to know you" he hesitated a moment "But it seems to me that something, or someone has being upsetting you recently, am I right?"

Negan acted like his words didn’t touch him and avoided the question "I don’t know what you mean. Do you have a cigarette?" He asked innocently and the doctor frowned
"You know I don’t smoke. …And neither do you." Negan let his head fall in his hands, his jaw clenched in irritation. "You usually talk about things" Carson continued

"Yeah, but this is different" Negan replied sharply, decided to make this conversation end as quickly as it had begun. His long time friend had just the opposite idea

"Because…?"

"Because she’s not a thing, she’s not a property, Carson, she’s not some supplies we’re having trouble retrieving, or a-a community we can’t make work for us !" He had risen his voice suddenly "Because she’s a god damn person, worse, she’s a fucking good person, I don’t even know how she does it. I’m telling you, you don’t find many like her these days" he laughed "she’s not even angry at all of this. You know damn well what I do when somebody upsets me, you know I don’t let shit fly around. But what the fuck am I supposed to do with her ? As far as I know she hasn’t done anything, she’s not even trying ! She’s just…here and that fucks me up somehow. I can’t be myself with her, I tried, I can’t. This is something I have to deal with, personally, I’m simply not used to that, that’s all"

"What makes you think you’re not yourself when you’re with her ?"

"Oh, don’t start this, man ! I’ve gone a little soft, yeah, sure, but it’ll pass" he tried to convince Carson and himself at the same time "You know what ? This is probably not even just about her and it sure as hell has nothing to do with-"

"With the fact that you’re in love with her ?" Carson challenged him. Negan’s head jumped up in a heartbeat, his eyes searching for a way out in Carson’s bright blue ones. The only way out was an answer, an answer Negan wouldn’t give tonight but Carson knew, he hadn’t denied.
Chapter Fourteen

In Alexandria

The very next day, when dawn hadn’t even set and the rest of the place was fast asleep, Sasha was already awake and ready to go. She had her hands on the steering wheel, sparkling eyes and a big knife laced against her thigh, ready for battle, just in case things didn’t go as planned. This morning she had managed to arrange her shift with father Gabriel, he had accepted to let her take his place for an hour or two and it was just what she needed. Thankfully he hadn’t asked too many questions, she didn’t want to lie to him more than she had to. As much as she wanted to do this she knew she was putting everybody in danger because of this little scheme, but she was doing what she thought was right to help her friend and nobody could reproach her that.

Her little notes were under her right hand against the wheel, and she followed the indications thoroughly. She hadn’t realized when she was hiding at the back of the truck but now it struck her just how close the Sanctuary was. Exactly twelve minutes of driving and she could see the imposing building. There was something a bit frightening about it, and superior as well. It looked like a castle, an impenetrable one with that, in the end it was a good thing that her only job was to deposit the car. She smiled to herself, thinking of how close Gillian was, probably asleep, of how much she wanted to go inside and bring her back and of how foolish it was to even consider it. Gillian had always told her she was too bold for her own good and in a more serious tone that it would cost her...something someday.

This is how Sasha would always remember her friend, caring, very wise, brave enough but never foolish. She was always impressed of her ability to think in a very pre-apocalyptic way, pushing her survival instincts aside and trying to handle things humanly.

Focusing back on the mission, Sasha turned off the engine and got out of the car. The idea now was to find a place, hidden but not too much, and close by. She noticed, and it disturbed her, that there was absolutely no walker nearby, nothing. Even on the road she hadn’t seen many. Either the Saviors had some pretty advanced skills in terms of prevention, or there was something she wasn’t aware of. Thinking of the latter Sasha started to shake a little, watching her surroundings, her fingers grazing the knife handle. Come on girl, what’s it with you ? Just find a good place for the car and be done with it ! There’s nothing around, come on.
Only a few meters ahead, she finally found a prefect spot. There was indeed a small ditch where
the car would be very hard to find for someone who didn’t know there was something to be
found, she would put some branches on the vehicle to hide it a little more and that would be a job
well done. She drove the car right inside the ditch, careful not to damage it and then scanned the
area for some fallen leaves, foliages, branches, anything she could find. Then she crossed the road
to the opposite side which seemed more furnished and soon, ended up bearing pounds of
greeneries.

The place was unbelievably quiet, peaceful almost, so when a suspect sound came from a nearby
tree, she dropped it all and ducked down, knife at the ready. Even though it was very unlikely,
Sasha prayed that the noise had come from an animal, a bird, anything but not a Savior. Whatever
it was, it had stopped making any sound, as if it was waiting too, afraid to be discovered as well.
At some point one of them had to make a move, reveal himself or make a statement. That won’t
be me, Sasha decided, and after the longest minute of her life, her patience was finally rewarded
when a male voice rose from behind the tree.

"I’m aware I was trespassing," he cleared his throat "I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to." Trespassing ?
Sasha frowned, trespassing what ? Where ? In the man’s voice she noticed a light tremor, he was
afraid, she could tell, and not just a little. Maybe she could use that to her advantage. Putting some
insurance in her voice, she addressed the mystery man

"How about you show yourself now ? Slowly." She said, almost with a commanding voice.

The man didn’t respond for a while, he was deliberating. Because she still couldn’t see him, when
she knew he had probably seen her, the idea that he didn’t have a gun either seemed plausible
enough.

"Do I have your word you won’t put me down when I do ?" The frightened voice asked,
confirming Sasha’s theory.

"You have my word."

The man took a deep breath and presented himself with his hands in the air. Sasha caught the
slight look of surprise with the baffled expression on his face when he saw her only weapon was a
knife.

The was he was dressed was…unexpected to put it simply. He looked like he had spent his entire
life crawling in the mud, it was all over his clothes, his hands, even his face. At first Sasha had
thought it was paint or makeup but no, looking more attentively the mud was real. Had she not
heard him speak, she easily could have mistaken him for a walker. The outfit was pretty
dangerous but if you wanted to go unseen that was probably the most efficient thing she had ever
seen, she would give him that.
She thought about what he had said earlier, *trespassing*, it seemed hard to trespass anything these days since everything was everyone’s property. But then she thought about where she was, about why she was currently hiding and mostly trying to hide a certain car. Yes, she was indeed on someone’s property and he wasn’t some nobody you wanted to mess with. Who was this man then ? Why did he look so afraid and...almost sorry to find himself on Negan’s lands ? He wasn’t a Savior, that much was for sure, he was obviously not from Alexandria and neither from the Hilltop. Even though Sasha suspected there were surely other communities in the area, she had never heard or seen any of *his kind*. Somehow he reminded her of the Wolves, the group that had attacked Alexandria about a year ago. Or was it more ? She honestly had stopped to even try counting the days.

Well aware that she had leverage while he still believed she was a Savior, she wanted to keep that advantage and waited for him to speak again. When he didn’t she pointed the knife at him more menacingly and motioned for him to speak with a nod.

"I-I know there was- there still is an agreement between our two communities but I was simply wandering around, I swear. See, I’m unarmed !" He said indicating the lack of holster on his belt, only that was a lie but Sasha didn’t know that yet, she was too focused on trying to get informations on that agreement. She also ignored that he was beginning to question her belonging to the Sanctuary. When outside their walls, they *always* carried firearms, no matter what, and this wasn’t Sasha’s case.

Taking one step forward to maintain her dominant position she asked

"Exactly, and remind me the main rules of this agreement !" The man jumped, he was a bit lost with her, in a way she seemed very sure of herself, and in the other she didn’t fit the Saviors’ description. Seeing he wasn’t responding, Sasha got a little more into character, and she had to admit she was having a lot of fun at it.

"Answer me ! Or maybe you would like to see what Negan thinks of this !" She threatened, enjoying the sudden look of fear in his eyes.

"No no no, please don’t !" He pleaded "I’ll tell you ! I’ll tell you the rules. We don’t step foot anywhere near the Sanctuary and you don’t go near the Lair, otherwise blood will be spread, bones mangled across the land and tomorrow be gone forever and for all." The man spoke like if he was directly reading from a biblical recital.

As much as she tried not to, Sasha completely got out of character, both intrigued and chocked, perhaps one more than the other, at what he had just said. It didn’t take long for the latter to understand this was all a masquerade and in a instant, he was throwing himself at her, his own, very custom made knife in hand. *You stupid bi-* she cursed herself for not checking him more thoroughly, this was beginner survivor level and she knew it. Right now, because of it, she had other things to deal with, like fighting for her life.
Thankfully he was not the best fighter around, that didn’t mean he wasn’t dangerous though. The thing was, he was making big, uncalculated movements restlessly in every direction possible, making it hard for Sasha to predict when and where he was going to hit.

On her part, she couldn’t seem to get close enough to stab him properly and realized that she was going to have to leave safety aside to wound him seriously, because he was not going to let her go unless one of them was down.

They went on a couple of minutes dodging each others attacks in turn, which was leading nowhere really, and only managed to exhaust them.

"Death will welcome you better than this world ever will again," the man said out of breath "embrace it girl, let it come to you." He illustrated his thought by opening his arms up to the sky. If this was a ruse, she didn’t know, but it was now or never if she wanted to strike. And so she did. Just when she thought it was it, he came back to his senses and swept his arm randomly in her direction, slicing a nice gash on her shoulder.

The pain, the pain was excruciating and it was difficult to focus on anything else than the wound. But Sasha wasn’t one to surrender before the end of a fight, she threw a strong header right against his forehead with all her strength, sending them both down and dizzy. Now it was all about who would be the quickest to recover and fortunately for her, Sasha had had the anticipation of the hit on her side. Climbing on him she threw punches after punches, not taking the time to breathe, to make sure he wouldn’t get up again. She did so knowing that in the end she would have to kill him, it was inevitable. He had seen her and knew she wasn’t from the Sanctuary, that left very few options to go with and with a little digging, he would find Alexandria in no time.

"Who are you ? Why would Negan make a deal with you ?" Sasha urged him while there was still time, but the man was laughing

"End this girl, or I will !"

"Answer me ! Who are you ?" She brought the edge of the knife just above his eye "Trust me you don’t wanna go like this." And he just kept on laughing

"We’re the ones who endure, we outlive death and welcome the dead among us. Immortals, we are, when you choose to remain a worthless pack of incurable souls. You are doomed ! All of you ! They will be coming for you, by our hand, by Wyatt’s hand, and that will be the end of-" Sasha had had enough of his ceaseless blabbering, she went through his eye with the knife, swiftly, making sure to reach the brain. Blood splattered up to her face and clothes, leaving on her the terrible smell of death, the one you could never get rid of.
Her eyes still fixed on him, she fell backwards and was trying to recall everything he had said. Either he was completely mad, or there was something lurking in the shadows, waiting to make quite the entrance when the time would come. Something told her they would have to be prepared until then. But again, it might have been just a load of bullshit...Maybe she had to tell Rick, she would make up something to answer why she was out in the first place. Or maybe she shouldn’t worry him for some uncertain information. She had a long walk back home to think about all of this.

After having covered the car with the branches, she threw one last look towards the huge factory, hoping that her friend would find the car and return to her as soon as possible. In a few days, if everything went as planned, they would be reunited. That thought only managed to cheer her up a little. Sasha placed the keys on the driver’s seat, slammed the door and proudly started to make her way back. It was a job well done, she thought, just between the two of them. Deep down she could only imagine how difficult it must have been for Gillian the past few days. She then thought about the woman who had given her Gillian’s note back in Alexandria. She prayed that she was really helping her and not playing double agent. Hopefully she was kind to Gillian in the Sanctuary too. Being alone was the worst thing these days, and that was exactly what Gillian was right now, Sasha regretted. Alone, prisoner of the Saviors, and who knows what Negan was putting her through...If only she knew. Not that her friend was having an insanely fun life at the moment, but she had managed to get the best out of Negan, for her sake, and it had worked perfectly for her so far.

Currently she was alright, still lying in her bed, awake. Like every morning she thought about what was going to happen today. Would someone try to kill her again? Or maybe she was going to be blessed with a normal day...And Arat, it had been a while since she had last seen her. Not after Karen’s death if she remembered correctly. She had not yet decided if she would talk to her about what had happened with Negan. In her mind that wasn’t much but she wasn’t completely blind. It was clear to her that Negan’s purely sexual interest in her had turned into...something else. She really didn’t want to talk about love. On her part she didn’t really know how to handle it. She could use it to her advantage but she wouldn’t. There were truly two sides of him, she couldn’t tell which one was the real one. They probably completed each other in many ways. Sometimes, and she wasn’t proud of it, she understood his behaviour and the way he had decided to take care of the Sanctuary. She just thought he simply had the wrong idea when it came to working with others. Instead of making all the communities work for him, why couldn’t he just work with them, supply each other. The way she saw it it would be easier and more efficient for everybody. She took the example of the Sanctuary but in the end it had been the same with the Governor at Woodbury, then Terminus and finally Alexandria. Yes, even Rick hadn’t managed to work with the people in charge of the place at the time. Was ruling with others the heart of the problem? Was it really this petty? The answer was probably yes, which often confused her. Why did everyone want to be in charge? This wasn’t an easy position, never had been. Giving orders, making the tough calls, sending people to battle and take responsibility for all of it. This wasn’t her idea of a comfortable position.

Maybe she would talk to Negan about it, cooperation instead of servitude, of how it could help him and his people. She would think about it at least, after all, according to what he had said when she had arrived, she was going to stay here for a little while.
Gillian glanced at the clock on the wall, it indicated 12:32…nope that wasn’t right. The battery was surely done for, thinking about it that was very probable that the clock had never been working at all. Well whatever time it was she had a urge to get up and get to work to prevent her from thinking too much. More than anything she needed to stretch her muscles, a little meditation session was in order.

Next door, a tired Negan was already up and washing his face in the bathroom. The hangover had truly got to him and something told him that the people of the Sanctuary would not be seeing him today. But this particular morning, there was something else. Dr. Carson’s words had been running through his mind all night. Negan had left him without saying a word, didn’t even bother denying because deep down he knew there was something. Admitting it to himself was already hard enough so he had preferred to remain emotionless in front of the doctor. The latter could have easily told if he was lying anyway.

Taking a liking to Gillian was not the problem, no, what bothered him was that he had a certain facade to maintain, a status, and this simply wasn’t like him. He already knew that since she had arrived, people had been talking. The Negan they knew was supposed to be cold, ruthless and wicked. He had to be mean, even to his own, had to screw his wives more than necessary because he had the power to do so. Lately he had been quite the opposite really. Maybe the successive deaths had got to him too, he thought, but then realized he was simply trying to find himself excuses to escape the truth.

How many times had he thought about Nigel recently? Not once. About Tom’s brutal death in that damned corridor? The memory was so blurred he had almost forgotten the young man’s face… And Karen, well, it just seemed to him that he had a dozen other wives to do the exact same job.

Negan grabbed a washcloth and wet it to press it against his forehead. As he was walking back to the bedroom, he noticed the remains of the aspirin Gillian had brought him yesterday. What were the odds, there was one pill left in the tablet. Damn this woman, he cursed inwardly. Even when she wasn’t there, she managed to help.

He was now facing the wall, his forehead pressed against it, knowing that she was just behind, barely a few feet away.

"And you, Sweetheart, who is always so wise. So right. What are you thinking, huh?…What should I do?" He placed his palms against the wall "Tell me what to do…"

Chapter End Notes

Hey there, you probably have noticed a new name in this chapter (Wyatt!). He won't be like a main or regular character but will be crucial to the rest of the story so bear
his name in mind! I hope you're enjoying the story so far, thank you so much for following, and most of all I hope you will like what's coming.
Avoiding her, that’s what Negan had been doing the past forty eight hours, purely and simply. The need to put some distance between them seemed obvious to him. He was well aware that he couldn’t keep doing this eternally. He was, after all her boss, or captor. It really was a matter of perspective. Sometimes he even felt like Gillian was the one calling the shots.

The first concerned had not missed that either, the Negan-avoiding-her part. When he had gone with a little group for a run two days ago, she had waited for him, or someone else, to call her for the job but nothing. No "we have enough men for now, sorry", no "we won’t be needing you for this one". Not that she was hoping for any form of apology or even an explanation but as far as she knew, Negan had hired her for that. And he, in turn, knew she was the best person qualified in the Sanctuary for this particular kind of job.

At least that gave her a day off, Gillian thought. Multiple actually, but there was still work to do inside the Sanctuary so that’s what she was doing today. Just like yesterday and the day before by the way. In the morning she had found Arat and they had decided to spend the day together. It felt like routine to Gillian. That’s when she remembered why she liked the runs so much more then this. Anything could happen on runs, not only stuff involving death, blood and tears. Every time it was a different ride, a different place that led to another and so on. There was also the gratification of bringing goods back home. Indeed, nothing felt good like finding a huge supply spot these days.

Instead of this, from this morning until now, she had been walking with her partner around the Sanctuary. They had talked a lot of course, Gillian had tried to avoid the Negan subject and had succeeded so far...before Arat started talking about it of course.

"So, why didn’t he bring you along for the run ?" She asked, chewing her sandwich "I thought that was your specialty…"

"I thought too." Gillian shrugged, although she could have elaborated a more precise answer. She suspected his behaviour had to do with what had happened last night. It was just a dance and so much more than that at the same time. It also surprised her that he of all people would shut himself off after an encounter like this.

Arat saw the confusion on her face, seriously wondering if something had happened between the two of them, but didn’t ask, knowing that if Gillian had something to say then she would eventually come to her later. She also suspected that if Negan had finally managed to get her in his bed, he would be acting in a completely different way.

"Do you think it has something to do with me ?" Gillian asked absenty
Arat stopped walking, a slight glimmer in her pupils "I don’t know, something happened?"
Gillian’s attention was now fully focused on her

"Not that," she promptly retorted, "nothing even close to it." Now that could be considered a lie.

Arat seemed relieved, from the beginning she had hoped Gillian wouldn’t fall in his arms so easily. *Smart girl,* she smiled and they resumed their walk.

At some point Gillian wanted to mention the dance. Just the dance though, no details, not the long looks after, not his confidence either. Just as she was about to talk, Isaac, one of the first guy Arat had introduced her to, appeared from the corner, a very satisfied smirk on his face.

"Afternoon, ladies." He greeted them both before turning his attention to Arat and leaning in to whisper in her ear. It didn’t escape Gillian that their relationship had moved forward, not just a bit. They were often together and she had seen him getting out of Arat’s room a few times lately. She was happy for her, really. It had been fun seeing them playing around with each other but at some point things had to get serious.

Pulling back from Isaac a bit embarrassed, she turned to Gillian

"I hate to ask you that but…would you mind finishing this shift," she clasped her hands together, "duty calls, well sort of." Gillian almost exploded in a laughter. They were really cute

"Duty calls, huh?" She scanned the two of them. They might as well do it right here and there. "Yeah sure, do what you have to do." They both thanked her and wished her a good day. She deduced she wouldn’t see either of them for the rest of it.

Tired of walking under the sun, which had decided to strike particularly hard today, Gillian headed to the crops where there were at least some trees to get under. She spent practically the rest of the day there, sympathizing with a dad and his daughter. The girl wasn’t working but she wanted to stay with her dad. Every now and then she asked if she could do anything to help but was denied every time. The sight saddened Gillian at a point she couldn’t even describe. This is all this little girl would ever see. Today it was her dad working hard to live and tomorrow it would be her. A sad faith indeed.

Even with the help of the trees, the heat was becoming more and more unbearable. The man dried
his sweaty forehead multiple times before falling and sitting backwards, out of exhaustion. Gillian
turned away from her occupation, turning towards him

"Are you alright ?" She asked, although the answer seemed pretty obvious

"Yes," he panted, chewing the little saliva he had, "I mean no but it’s not like I can quit or
anything." He had a point.

A guard that was passing by, not the smartest one, saw the man sitting on his ass and frankly
didn’t like it.

"Hey !" He barked, already striding in their direction "You’re not on fucking vacancy, you’re here
to work !"

The man started to get up, not without some difficulty "We could use some water, it’s really hot
under there." The guard threw him a death glare, Gillian didn’t like were this was going. She put
her hand on the little girl’s shoulder, bringing her behind her.

"You mean wasting water for lazy people like you, huh ?" The guard spat, hitting him in the back
with his rifle. "I’m gonna teach you !" And he kept on hitting while the girl was screaming.

"Stop this! I think you made your point." Gillian said, doing her best to hide the scene from the
child’s view. The guy turned slowly, biting his lower lip in irritation. He had not planned to be
interrupted, let alone by her.

"What’d you say ?"

"I said, it’s enough. His bloody daughter is here !" She growled, cursing the man’s stupidity
inwardly.

"And why should I care ?"

"What ? You got something to prove ? I think we all know who is in charge here, we accept it and
we do our best to keep you all satisfied. Now, leave the guy alone, it’s about eighty degrees here,
they need the rest. You can’t expect them to produce if you don’t give them the means to."
He knew she was right but agreeing out loud was another story. He simply lowered his weapon and took a step backward.

"That’s your lucky day, old man. You got yourself a free ticket for the infirmary." He said, spitting inches away from the wounded man.

Gillian hurried at his side to help him get up, the girl following closely behind. As they started walking, the guard stopped them in their tracks.

"You’re not going anywhere," he addressed Gillian, "they can handle themselves. And you get your ass back to work." She was aware that she had no rights here, so she let them go and walked back to her spot. "Don’t think that because you’re fucking him you can go on and give me some orders." Oh, here we go again, she thought. She hadn’t missed this. Walking passed him, she decided to simply ignore the comment.

"That’s it, back to work, slut" he grinned. Even her patience had limits, she spun around quickly but he drew his weapon on her just as fast. "I fucking dare you" his smile grew wider but it was short lived as Simon walked by and saw this mess.

"Jesus fucking christ, Larry, do you always need to make a fuss about everything ?" he breathed in exasperation, "put that damn thing down before you hurt yourself and take a fucking walk." That was not a request and that much was clear to Larry who almost automatically put his weapon away and started walking, tail right up between the legs.

Gillian would have thanked Simon for the intervention but he was already on his way. It surprised her that he was here in the first place and not part of the run. Although, when Negan was not in the Sanctuary, he would put him in charge as he had a complete trust in him. Simon was good at his job, he liked things square and simple and handled problems with a flick of his fingers. Very much Negan-like.

Around 9:00pm, Gillian was in her bed reading a book she had found in the bookcase. It wasn’t really interesting, or just not her type put it permitted her to pass the time before going to bed. However, tonight, she wasn’t exactly gonna go to bed. When everyone would be asleep she would go on her little adventure to Alexandria. If the car was here that is.

About twenty minutes later she heard vehicles entering through the gates. They were back. He was back. She hurried up to the window to see if the fishing had been good. Yes it had. She cursed as she saw the amount of stuff they had brought back along with them.

Jesus, did they rob a supermarket or something ?! She breathed, it was really impressive.

Then she saw Negan. He looked positively tired, they all did. After all they had been gone the entire day. The more tired they were, the better it was for her. She didn’t need them wondering
around as she was out. Sitting back comfortably on the bed, she waited for the night to be truly dark. Waited, and waited, and waited until she fell in a light sleep with the book still in her hands.

Jumping more than waking up, Gillian looked at her watch right away, 1:15am. She let go of the breath she was holding. God, how she hated falling asleep like this. Wasting no time, she put her boots on, zipped up her vest and grabbed her knife on the counter.

The corridor was very silent, almost too silent. Well, everything often seemed suspicious when one tried to be discreet.

Throwing glances in every direction possible, she progressed through the long corridors of the factory before finally reaching the infirmary. Pills for Maggie, that’s what she was coming for. From what she had heard The Saviors had practically emptied Alexandria’s medical supplies.

Now came the moment she had dreaded. Carson was there of course, snoring softly on his chair. She briefly wondered if he ever had proper sleep sometimes. Trying to keep it as quiet as possible, she started to search for the medicines. There were so many different ones, it was going to take a while to find what she was looking for, she didn’t even know exactly what it was herself. Luck was rarely on her side either…

"Are you looking for something ?" Gillian didn’t even flinch, his voice was so calm. She turned around slowly, and simply told him the truth.

"I need medicines," she cleared her throat, "for pregnancy." As expected she saw his expression change instantly, his eyes widening in shock. She stopped him right away "It’s not for me, Carson…Please don’t ask any questions." She would have understood if he refused to help her, giving the little information she was able to offer him. However if he did refuse, she’d have to do something she would surely regret.

The doctor opened another drawer and got the precious pills out. He didn’t really express anything as he handed them to her but held her gaze as he did so

"I don’t wanna know what you’re up to," she nodded, "just be aware that if he learns anything about it," Carson’s face showed only regret, "he’ll kill you. Not matter how he feels about you right now. He will."

"I know," her voice was barely above a whisper, "Thank you, Carson." She smiled weakly

"Don’t mention it." He said, his eyes compassionate.

Gillian exited the room, her head low, not very proud that she had just involved him too.
Once outside the fences, she exhaled soundly. The moon was very shy tonight, there wasn’t much light to help her and using a flashlight was absolutely out of the question. Fortunately she managed to reach the road without much trouble. She pretty much groped about in the dark for at least five minutes until bingo! The bloody car was here! She couldn’t believe it, this was it.

Getting rid of the branches on the windshield, she climbed aboard eagerly, finding the keys on the seat, along with her friend’s notes to get to the Sanctuary. Gillian knew the road but this could always help just in case.

"Sasha, you’re the fucking best, I swear!" She laughed as she started the engine. She was off to Alexandria.

As she got closer and closer to the promised land, her heart started beating faster. It had been weeks since she had seen her people. She hadn’t been alone all this time but they were her family and that changed everything. Knowing that she was almost there, she turned off the headlights. Only Sasha could see her, unfortunately. Of course she would have liked to do this differently but for their safety, she had to remain hidden.

Gillian parked the car on the side of the road. Nobody would go through there at this hour.

As she marched towards Alexandria, her home, a few lights started to gleam in the night. They were coming from the watchtowers and her breath stopped as she caught the sight of Morgan in the distance, his wooden stick in hand, sharp eyes scanning the surroundings. She couldn’t help but smile, even if she knew she couldn’t even approach him.

She made her way to the back, where the walls where lower, and climbed. It was harder than she thought but she managed. Sasha’s house was pretty much in the center. As she walked to it, Gillian watched the silent homes, still moved to have made it here.

The window was opened, not very surprising given the heat. Easily she sneaked in, careful not to make too much noise. Inside, she couldn’t see a thing, she ran her hand along the wall to find the stairs. Suddenly the light turned on, blinding her partially. She couldn’t see but she could hear, and that voice warmed her heart

"Oh my god..." Of course she was awake. Ever since she had deposited the car she had been waiting like a kid would for Father Christmas.

"Long time no see." Gillian greeted her and Sasha rushed down the stairs, almost falling on her way, and jumped in her friend’s arms.

"You have know idea—" she couldn’t finish her thought as tears fought their way out of her.

"Hey, tough girl! What the bloody hell happened to you while I was gone, huh? I’m here now,
it’s okay,” she hugged her tighter against her, "I’m okay."

Sasha dried her tears of joy, looking at her as if she was the last thing she would ever see. Her shaky hands came to rest around her face. It had been not even a month yet it felt like they were meeting for the first time. Sasha finally invited Gillian to sit on the sofa.

They talked about nothing and everything, recounted old memories. A real family reunion. Sasha told her about how they had coped with her being gone, of how every single day, they feared that a bunch of Saviors would come back with her dead body. They talked and talked and not without discomfort, Gillian checked her watch regularly. She couldn’t be gone forever or else she would get caught. Also she had no idea of what was actually going on at the Sanctuary. If she did, she would already be out.

At the Sanctuary

Most of the lights were on in the crisis room. It was extremely rare at this hour, but there seemed to be a serious problem. Negan was holding a little piece of paper in his hand, surrounded by Simon, Arat and a few others. It was a letter. A letter that had to do with the disturbing mystery man Sasha had left dead only few meters away from the Sanctuary’s gates. Of course none of the Saviors knew that yet, neither did the author of the letter. For now it just mentioned that somebody, referred to as a Knight of the Brotherhood—yes, sir, had gone missing.

Negan was pacing in the room, clearly irritated. He didn’t like problems, especially when they involved this other group. Theoretically, none of his people could be responsible for this uncanny disappearance. They were all aware of the rules and of what trespassing them meant. Negan had sent a guard to get Gillian, her head having popped instantly in his mind as soon as he had got the letter. He probably—no—he should have warned her about them, and this as soon as she had arrived.

The guard came back out of breath, with bad news…obviously.

"She’s not in her room, sir." Negan stopped dead in his tracks. This was starting to be a bit much for one evening.

"Then where the hell is she ?" He grunted furiously

"I—I don’t—"
"Well don’t fucking stare at me ! Start looking for—"

"Sir!" Another one of his guys entered the room "I’m sorry to interrupt but the messenger is waiting.

"Just tell him to fucking go, we’re no babysitters" He thought he was going to kill everybody in this damn room.

"He says he’s not allowed this leave without an answer from you" Negan cursed under his breath. This was going to be a long night, not particularly his favourite type.

*In Alexandria*

As they were chatting, Gillian wondered if Sasha knew that she had to go back at some point, because the way she talked, she was elaborating a plan to hide her. After a brief moment of silence and complicit glances, she said tentatively

"Sasha,…you’re aware that I have to go back now…" The confusion across her friend’s face was heartbreaking. Then came realization.

‘‘You can’t go back,” she said in panic, "I mean you just made it there ! Why can’t you stay ?” She was shaking again, she didn’t want to lose her, not again.

"If Negan learns that I’ve escaped, let alone with your help, he will come for you. All of you”.

"But you can’t go back there !" Sasha whined, "I mean that man is crazy, he could kill you whenever he wants. If you’re there at least we can defend you.”

Gillian shook her head "They’re an army, Sasha, you’ve seen it. There’s no way we can ever win in an open fight. I have to go back.” She hesitated but then went for it, "I don’t think he’ll hurt me.” She confessed, leaving her friend dumbfounded.

"How’s that ?" Sasha frowned
"He…” No, she couldn’t say it…, “I think he likes me” she tried to stay as vague as possible.

"He likes you ? Like—what, is he in love ?"

"No ! I mean I don’t think you can call this that" Gillian retorted, "Just trust me on this, please”. Suddenly, Sasha remembered what Negan had said when he had come to Alexandria, about the two of them. It felt wrong to ask, so wrong, but she was totally lost.

"Did you and him…” she couldn’t even say it. Thankfully it wasn’t too hard to understand.

"Why would you even think that ?"

Nicely played, girl, very nice, Sasha cursed herself "I—sorry. He said it and I fucking believed him, I’m sorry.” It was Gillian’s turn to frown, blood slowly becoming hot under her skin

"He said what ?" Oh, he didn’t

"He said you two had some…” she looked for an elegant way to put it, "quality time together, something like that" Oh, of course he did

"Son of a… Aaargh what an asshole !" She said getting up. The thing pissed her off even more when she realized she wouldn’t be able to argue about it with him, otherwise she would give herself away.

After more precious minutes of argument, Gillian finally got the better of Sasha. It was hard for the both of them, but they were strong. They had gone through worse in their time. This was just another obstacle and they would overcome it. Almost forgetting, Gillian fumbled with her pockets and retrieved the pills for Maggie. Sasha grinned at her, she never ceased to amaze her.

With a heavy heart she opened the door for her, resting a hand on her shoulder

"I really hope you know what you’re doing, girl.” Not letting her time to reply, she hugged her one last time and let her go with regret.
Gillian embarked on the reverse journey. Her eyes were full of remorse, her head messed up and her muscles tired.

*At the Sanctuary*

After a little consultation with his peers, Negan decided to handle the problem with caution. He addressed one of his guys

"Go tell the messenger that we understand his people's concern and that I will do what’s necessary to shed light on this affair." The man nodded and exited the room.

Simon turned to his leader right away, pursuing their conversation "If not her than who? Every single person in this place knows about the deal and respects it. She’s the only one who didn’t know and now she’s missing?! C’mon, there’s nothing more to the picture here, Negan." Arat was silent in the corner, she didn’t know what to think.

"For now we wait" Negan stated

"Wyatt’s not gonna like this" Simon warned

"Who gives a fuck what Wyatt wants?! This maniac as no leverage, no authority. Just let him come and see what happens!" Negan grinned

"Who’s Wyatt?" Every person in the room jumped and turned to look at the owner of the voice. It seemed that the missing girl had been found after all.
Hey there, I'm back! I know it's been a while but I'm happy to say that my exams are all done (and that I passed!) so I guess that means I'm all yours now!
In this chapter you'll learn more about the mysterious Wyatt...Hope you'll like it!

Chapter Sixteen

"Wyatt is not going to like this, Negan" Simon said with insurance. He was fisting the aim of his shirt with anxiety, his knuckles whitening under the pressure. From his point of view, shit would be raining soon.

"Who gives a fuck what Wyatt wants?! This maniac has no leverage, no authority. Just let him come and see what happens!" Negan spat with a patronizing grin. He didn’t like the man in question and didn’t fear him, however he had to be very careful with the matter at hand.

"Who’s Wyatt?"

A multitude of wide eyes suddenly turned to the owner of the voice. Gillian. A sparkle in her eyes, she was just standing on the doorstep, waiting for whatever was coming. Negan froze for a second, a lot of shit was happening all of a sudden, preventing him from making a decision on which problem he should handle first. On one side, his little protégé had just shown up from nowhere after having disappeared for who knows how long. And on the other there was this damn note left by the messenger that led Negan to think he was going to have to arrange a little meeting with an old "friend" to clear the situation. One problem at a time he repeated himself as calmly as he could. It happens that one of these problems was conveniently located right in front of him at this very moment, he just had to inquire, and he did.

"Leave us" he said through greeted teeth, not needing to say who needed to stay and who had to leave as his eyes were piercing right through her. Negan’s men exchanged dumbfounded looks before their leader urged them again "Do I need to fucking spell it out for you?" He turned towards them, propping Lucille on his shoulder "Out!

Everyone picked their shit up and left through the backdoor without another word. Arat eyed her friend worriedly, she had no idea where she had been either but if Negan had found out something he didn’t like, Gillian would be in trouble, the no-return kind of trouble.
After several minutes of silence and of pacing in the quiet room he softly spoke

"Am I really gonna need to ask for it ?" He growled, leaning on the table behind him

Gillian acted like she had no clue of what he was talking about, she propped herself on one of the counters

"Ask for…what exa-"

"Don’t’” he warned. He looked positively conflicted for a man of his composure, that note displayed on the table surely had something to do with it, Gillian thought. But Negan was focused on her now. "Don’t play that game with me, Gil’, not now. Where the fuck were you ?"

At first she wanted to say she had been consulting Carson for personal matters but then remembered that he was not to be implied in this big lie, he didn’t deserve that and she had somewhat promised him she wouldn’t involve him earlier. If something had to happen to her, fine, she had disobeyed the rules and was the only one responsible for it. But there was no way she was dragging someone else along with her.

"I took a walk around the Sanctuary" she said tentatively, only causing him to frown in misunderstanding

"Oh, so was half an hour good enough for you or do you need some more ?" He answered sarcastically, bitterness filling every word.

"I needed some air, Negan, that’s all. It's not easy for me, can you understand that ?" Could pity work ? She didn’t think so…

"I didn’t bring you here so you could have it easy. You’re supposed to be a prisoner, remember ?" he laughed "Doesn’t look anything near it"

When Gillian looked up to his face he was still waiting. He wouldn’t let go until she would give him a satisfying answer, but she couldn’t think of anything.

"What do you want me to say ? I don’t have a better story than the truth".
Wether he liked this answer or not he didn’t show it and started to walk around the room again, thinking. Her eyes couldn’t seem to leave Lucille, who was gently swinging with his footsteps. He wouldn’t, right ?…Carson had warned her, though, he had said it loud and clear that if Negan found out about whatever she was doing, he would kill her, no questions asked.

“When we danced the other night” he started, laying Lucille down on the table and taking a step towards Gillian ”and that you went to our dear doctor just to get me pills, how long did it take you ? Like twenty minutes or so ?” It didn’t sound like a question, he knew that, he knew exactly what he was talking about and Gillian was astonished that he was able to remember anything from that night.

As he was speaking, Negan was observing her with attention, waiting for her to give away any sign of lie. He found none. She was just as good as he was. His mind had not yet decided if he believed her or not, it was a fifty-fifty for now. Still, he wanted her to understand he wasn’t one to be messed with.

"Fool me once, shame on you…” he was still walking in her direction "Fool me twice…” Negan didn’t finish the saying, as though he didn’t want it to be true.

"Do you really remember that night ?” Gillian cleared her throat, dry from the lack of speaking, or out of fear…”The night we danced ?”

Negan’s eyebrows shot up and he laughed, as if the question was so absurd that it shouldn’t even have been asked in the first place

"I can never forget that, Sweetheart" He continued his slow journey towards her and soon was standing between her parted legs, hanging from the counter. Gillian cursed herself for not closing them sooner. He leaned in to rest his hands on either side of her thighs

"I remember every detail. Your breath, cut under the intensity of each moment, our eyes, wanting to get lost anywhere but in each others’ " The urge to kiss her was pushing him, again and again, instead he went for her neck and she stayed very still while he nuzzled it, feeling his prickly jaw and cheek against her skin every now and then. No matter how much he wanted it, his lips never connected with her. That was a line he had recently decided not to cross, at least not without her say in it.

Negan lifted his head so that he was looking at her right in the eyes

"And I remember your body” he smiled genuinely, replacing a strand from her messy undercut "so tempted yet determined not to fall into the big bad wolf’s claws"

"Oh, so you just know I was so tempted, right ?" She found him pretty sure of himself
"Come on, darlin’, those tiny moves you made against me"

"All part of the dance" she assured

"The sounds you made" he was really enjoying this

"Just your imagination" she countered again

"That little ass of yours, grinding against my-"

She cut him before he could say anything more "Okay, now you’re just trying to embarrass me." And he was, at least now, because what had happened just before he started playing with her felt pretty serious to him.

He pouted his lips "No, Sweetheart, I’m just," he grazed his fingers against her jeans "testing the waters" he growled seductively. Gillian was quick to grab a hold of his wrists and lift them up and away from her, denying him his little fun

"Might wanna test the waters a few feet away from here if you don’t wanna end up with my knee in your ballsack" she smiled fatuously, although it sounded more like a big fuck you to him. But he accepted it gladly, he had started the game after all.

Gillian let go of Negan’s wrists and he went to sit at the table, she joined him shortly after. Than, more seriously, over a glass of whisky he told her that for the time being he was going to believe her story but that if he learnt from anyone that she had tried to bullshit him, he would have no other choice than to make an example out of her.

What was really great between them, Negan found, was that they always understood each other rather quickly. Perhaps mostly because they respected each other. The both of them had lived terrible things in the past and were still struggling today in their own ways. Although he hadn’t told her about his story, the story of his late wife, they were connected by their losses.

When she had told him earlier that it wasn’t easy for her at the Sanctuary it wasn’t a lie. She had just been taken away by the people who had recently become her family, and from time to time she was afraid of never seeing them again. Seeing Sasha today had given her strength but now she missed her even more. The worst thing for her had been to see Alexandria’s familiar faces and not being able to talk to them, to hug them and tell them just how much she longed to get back.
There was however something that the Sanctuary had, and that Alexandria didn’t possess: Negan. Him and his comforting aura that was just the same as hers. They didn’t necessarily need to talk, one look was enough. And for the record, Negan knew more about her past than anyone else at the Sanctuary, except for Sasha. When she had opened up to him about her dead husband, she hadn’t left any details out. Alexandrians only knew she had lost her life partner in a terrible herd attack but nothing else. Weeks after her arrival in Alexandria, Gillian had come to understand what a strong and happy family Rick had managed to build over the years and she had not wanted to bring the darkness of her life in it. With Negan it was different, there was a darkness in him too, she had finally found that out the night they had danced. He was in need of something, something he hadn’t managed to acquire, not by steeling from other communities, not with sleeping with whoever he wanted. No matter how much he had, how much he took, he was still missing this little thing that he couldn’t quite put his finger on. And when she was around he felt a little closer to it.

Gillian declined when he offered her another glass of whisky, he followed her lead. Surely they didn’t want to end up dancing again, or maybe they did but wanted to try it when sober this time. As she laid her empty glass on the table, the note caught her attention. She had almost forgotten the reason they were all awake at this hour in the first place. Maybe it wasn’t her business, but it surely concerned the Sanctuary and she was in it at the moment so…

"What’s this all about ? The note, the messenger ?"

Negan traced his finger along the edge of the glass. She probably didn’t need to know about the messenger but the rest concerned everyone

"You said you went to walk around the Sanctuary at least twice recently. That means outside the fences, right ?" She nodded and he didn’t even bother asking how she had made it past the guards. That would be for later, it wasn’t her trial anymore. "And on your little field trips have you met anyone, seen anyone that didn’t look like a Savior ?"

Gillian was a bit surprised by his questions, she had no idea the note would have anything to do with her.

"No, I’ve seen no one and I made sure no one saw me" she said with conviction.

"You made sure no one saw you…” he said thoughtfully "Does that mean you could have fought or…killed someone that would have stood in your way ?"
"Negan, I didn’t see anyone, I swear ! And no, I wouldn’t have killed anyone, that is not how I do things. What is this, what am I accused of exactly ?"

Negan slipped the note across the table

"About two or three days ago a nearby community found out one of their own had gone missing. They asked around but came up empty handed, that leaves the Sanctuary." He said in a tone she had never heard from him. It was closer to distress than fear, either way it was clear that it weighed him, that’s what Gillian found weird.

"Why would you care, I mean, every single community around answers to you, why would you have to care for one of their missing person ?" Gillian realized just how awful that sounded but it was simply the truth.

"Not every community, Gil' " Negan said with concern. He hadn’t really planned to tell her about this story but it was too late now, she had to know. "Before I tell you anything I really need to know if you saw anyone that was not a Savior outside the fences."

"I swear I didn’t see anything, I took every necessary precautions". She assured him. He nodded, stood up and dragged his chair around the gigantic table to sit near her. As he did so, Gillian checked the window briefly, the night was still impossibly dark and quiet. It reminded her of the time it was and also of how much she needed to sleep. Three hours of rest was all she had had and it was far from enough.

The story he was about to tell her was pretty serious and he honestly didn’t know where to start. Gillian remained silent and let him the time he needed to begin. The man she now had in front of her was neither the asshole of a leader the Sanctuary had, or the conflicted man who didn’t know how to behave with her. There were so many sides of him she didn’t know about, it was frightening and equally gripping.

A few minutes past and he finally found a starting point to his story.

"When I first arrived here with my ridiculously small crew, we were completely alone. Nobody had come here before, the abandoned stores were full, it was a true fucking gold mine ! I quickly understood that I could make this place bigger, greater, simply by adding new people. So that’s exactly what we did, we scavenged to find them and find them we fucking did. The Sanctuary grew in no time, we had weapons, food stocks, anything that any of us could dream of in a shitty world like this. The place grew more and more, the people who didn’t join us started to fear us. We behaved like kings and I guess we became...noisy. Turns out we weren’t alone after all, and that since the goddamn beginning”. Gillian was listening with great attention, and she observed too. By the expression on his face it seemed like he missed those days. The beginning. Everything
"One day we received a message, pretty much like this one," Negan pointed the piece of paper on the table, "it said that we were summoned to a meeting with the Great Wyatt or some bullshit like that. At first I swear I thought this was a fucking joke but we still went to the meeting, heavily armed to show whoever was behind that letter that they shouldn’t mess with us. That’s the day we got to meet Wyatt and his loyal followers, the Immortals." A smirked escaped Gillian’s mouth at the sound of that name, which made Negan smile too.

"I know right, I thought exactly the same thing. These guys are quite something…a bunch of fucked up fanatics driven by a holly mission, they say. They consider themselves elected by God and his lawful servant on earth, Wyatt. Stealing other’s supplies is not what they do, if you wanna join them, you have to survive with your own skills. The people who live are elected. The rest…they join Wyatt’s other army, among the dead. I guess that’s his biggest strength, dead or alive, his people remain his people and they serve a purpose. The deadliest weapon there is today is walkers, and he understood that pretty damn quickly."

Negan was conscious that this story could be hard to believe, it sounded like a narrative from a horror novel.

"So anyway I met with Wyatt and we spoke for a while. He realized what man power I had, I guess that made him change his plans a little bit. We had to come to an agreement because if we came to a fight, he and I would lose a lot of people, and there wouldn’t even even be a winner to see what was left. We agreed that the eastern part of the region belonged to them and that the rest was ours. To make sure we all understood he took us to what they call the Pit. You’ve never seen a place like this…It’s like a gigantic underground cave, Wyatt said it took them years to dig it and frankly I gotta believe the man. The worst is not the Pit though, it’s what’s inside." Negan closed is eyes as if to recall what he had seen that day. It was the first and last time but it was enough "You’ve probably seen a herd of a hundred walkers, right ?" Gillian nodded "Well…Wyatt has thousands. Thousands and thousands of walkers. If we break the deal, if a Savior steps foot on their lands and that he decides to release them…the Sanctuary, Hilltop, Alexandria, they’re all done. Nobody has enough bullets to kill so many walkers, nobody. The deal had been working very well so far, hell, we didn’t even have to see each other. I haven’t seen Wyatt or his goons in months and I was personally all right with that. And here we are now…"

Since it was very probable that the Immortal was on Sanctuary grounds, it was Negan who had to initiate the searches. It could take hours like it could take ages. Thankfully, he had a lot of contacts and resources. If the man was alive, they would probably find him in no time, however if he was dead…

Negan wanted this to be done as quick as possible, he would put everyone on the job starting now. He got up and took the letter with him, he needed to tell Simon about the little change of
plan. The search would begin in a few hours.

"Stay here, I’m not quite done with you. I’ll be back in a minute." He said to Gillian who was seconds away from passing out of exhaustion.

Simon was waiting for him in the parking lot. They usually met there after the meetings to discuss things in detail. They trusted each other and worked incredibly well together. Simon was, in more ways than one, an extension of Negan.

They never had a problem like this before and didn’t quite know how to deal with it. What if they never found the guy? What if he was dead? They kept asking those questions to each other but both agreed that for now, they would tell the Saviors the man was alive and that everything would work out fine.

It had been a long time since Simon had gone to bed with knots in his stomach. Whenever there was a problem he handled it within seconds, that was his job and he was damn good at it. But what to do when you didn’t have your hands on the problem yet? He hoped a good night’s sleep would help him figure it out. Little did he know sleep was going to be very hard to find tonight.

Negan didn’t have this problem, he still had things to take care of with Gillian. He wanted to know more about her repeated escapades, about how she had managed to get past the guard. He figured that if Fat Joey was in duty, it shouldn’t have been much of a challenge.

He just had to ask and that is exactly what he was going to do. He pushed the door in one motion

"So, you and I have a- oh shit" he cursed when he saw she had fallen asleep, her arms and head resting on the table. "Oh, Sweetheart, that’s no place to sleep" he said affectionally. He passed one hand behind her back and under her arm, the other under her knees and carried her to her bedroom. He was surprised she didn’t wake. From what Simon had told him she had had a tough day, working under the sun for hours, almost getting in a fight with Larry. She had done her part.

He laid her down gently on the mattress, took her shoes off but didn’t put the covers over her, it was actually quite hot in the room.

Instead of leaving he sat on the bed and watched her for a moment. He had never seen her sleeping before. She was just the same as when awake, composed, peaceful. He envied her right now. Like Simon he probably wouldn’t be able to find sleep himself.

Running the back of his fingers against her shaved sides, just above the ear, he leaned in to kiss her forehead but then remembered his rule. No kissing. He cursed inwardly and exited the room as quietly as possible, careful not to wake her from her dream, or nightmare, given the stories he had just told her…

End Notes
Hope you enjoyed that first chapter, English is not my language so you might find some weird expressions or sentences...feel free to let me know if you find any faults or something :) I'll try to post one chapter a week but I'm not known to be regular haha!

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!