

# inner demons.

Angelica twiddled with her thumbs, her knee bouncing up and down. Her head was pounding, a throb behind her eyes, swirling around in her skull. Her brown hair swayed in the wind. She stared at the pavement, swinging her legs. "Angel," the voice sounded tired. She lifted her head, Oliver's hair tousled into messy curls. "Are you in, or out?" he gazed into her eyes, an eyebrow raised. "Am I – what?" she breathed out; her eyes narrowed.

Oliver sat down next to her, "Are you in the job, or out?" Angelica choked on her own breath. Her dress seemed to stick to her every growing second. "Yes... No... I don't know, Ollie," she stumbled over her words, uncertainty laced throughout. He stood up, "I need to know, Angelica."

"Yes okay, okay, fine. But only for you," she pointed her finger accusingly at him, tease behind her words. "Okay, okay, meet me at this address—" he clicked his pen, scribbling some words and numbers onto some paper, "– tomorrow, three pm, don't be late."

He smoothed his jeans down before reaching a hand forward. Tucking a piece of hair behind her ear, a blush crept up her neck. "You need to prepare for tomorrow, angel. There's, uh, it's going to be rough," he dropped his hand and sighed. Leaving with a curt nod.

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Oliver really did not want to be here, in the middle of a raging war. The stuffy room was full of bodies – ex-soldiers – pressed against each other, engaged in conversations. "No, Oliver Mitchell?" high pitched, scratchy in his ears. He spun on his heel, bobbed brown hair coming into view. "Eliza Taylor, fancy seeing you here," his tone bored into her, a hand on his hip. She giggled, keeping her voice hushed, "You know why I'm here, Oliver."

He laughed, the Japanese girl's face scrunching up at the loudness. She brushed her fringe out of her eyes, "Is she coming?" Oliver nodded, his chuckling ceasing. "Yeah, told her to be here in –" he fiddled his fingers into his pocket, pulling his watch out, "– three minutes." Eliza nodded, brushing her hands over her skirt.

"Oh, um, excuse me! Sorry, 'scuse me, thanks," Angelica's sweet voice echoed through the room, Oliver's lips twitching into a smile. "Angelica Marin – never thought I'd see the day," Eliza stuck her hand out to the panting girl, "Eliza Taylor, the organiser of this job." Angelica's blue eyes flitted between the two, taking the girl's hand. "Pleasure," she chuckled, pulling her hand to tuck a lock behind her ear.

"Ollie, I missed you," she stepped up to the brunette, bringing her arms around his middle. "Me too, Angel." He pulled her close, his cheek resting on the crown of her head. He grasped the material of her dress. Feeling it between his fingers, he sighed as her scent washed over him. Strawberries. He could never get enough, it lingered on his skin for hours. Letting go, she stared up at him with doe eyes, something to get so easily lost in.

A cough spurred them. "Let's go, Oliver." Eliza led him to the front as Angelica shifted her feet, unsure what to do. "Can I get everyone's attention please!" Oliver gathered the attention of the crowd. "So, you're all here for one reason, the same job." Hums of agreement echoes through the room. "There's gonna be a murder." The sentence, so vague, so blunt. It made Angelica splutter on her breath. How did he say that so casually? "And we're gonna stop it." Angelica coughed, what had

she gotten herself into. There were cheers, but one stood still, mouth clamped shut. "Be ready, at the next air strike."

The alarm blared in Angelica's ears. Clutching her ears tight, she squeezed her eyes shut. It felt much louder than normal. She scrambled to pay for her rations, chucking the little money she had on the counter.

Screams echoed around the street. She ran and ran. Bumping into people, tripping over her feet. "Angel!" Her head whipped around in every direction, landing on Oliver. She ran towards him, falling into his chest. "C'mon, we don't have time," he reached into the back of his jeans, pulling out a pistol, "Take this, you don't have a choice."

Angelica shook her head, tears brimming in her eyes. He thrust the gun into her hands, "You don't have a choice, dammit!" He hated seeing her cry. He shook his head, like she had done. He wrapped an arm around her, guiding her around people.

"Keep your head down," he muttered into her ear, "We don't want them to see us." She kept her mouth sealed shut. Guiding her head down, she looked at her feet – the worn-out shoes she could never replace.

The streets were becoming deserted as a shot rang through the air. He cursed under his breath, "Get down!" He pushed Angelica into a side street. "What did you get me into?!" she shouted at Oliver, fear coursing through her body.

"I'll be back," he whispered, running off. Angelica couldn't sit still. Creeping around the corner, she kept her back to the wall. Shot! The noise ran through her body and her eyes widened. Eliza had shot someone. She blinked at her whilst Eliza just stared at her, guilty. "Get down!" Angelica ducked quickly, a shot being fired.

"Come out to play!" The voice was raspy, and evil. She narrowed her eyes as she stood up. Wrong move. A man had a gun pointed at her, a smug grin littering his features. He shot it three times, the gun shaking from the force. Angelica pointed her gun and shot.

Blood. There was so much blood. Her white dress was covered in it. Oliver rounded the street corner, Eliza was towering over a man, repeatedly shooting her gun. "Hey!" She whirled around, blinking at the brunette.

"Angelica!" She sprinted forward, dropping to her knees. Oliver's eyes widened as he pushed himself forward, falling onto his knees too. "Hey," Angelica was weak, losing blood, losing life, "I shot a man, Ollie, why did I do that?" Tears gracefully fell down her face. "Nono, you did great, Angel. You did nothing wrong."

"Ollie, can I tell you something?" He nodded his head whilst she rubbed his cheek with her thumb. "I've had my inner demons for a while, I couldn't escape from my mother dying," she coughed on blood, her eyes dimming, "I love you, I'm sorry."

Her hand fell, falling at her side. Oliver kissed her bloody lips, "I love you too, Angel." Crying his heart out as Eliza embraced him, he must face his own inner demons. For Angelica.