Solo Run

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Author's Note: Written in response to a prompt I was sent on Tumblr (see below). This takes place in 2016 or 2017. Carl just transferred to Police Caledonia roughly six months ago. (This is, of course, just my headcanon, we don't know when exactly Carl came to Scotland.)

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asmuchasidliketo

I do have a whumpy prompt that's been tickling my brain for a few days... and is more than what I can easily imagine. I would love something exploring the relationship between Carl and Moira. Not with any kind of romance - more like he's a pain in her arse, but they both respect and care for each other, even if both of them would die rather than admit it. Maybe something about Carl getting hurt protecting her, badly enough that she legitimately worries?

Carl sits behind the wheel of the nondescript black Ford, drumming his fingers on the steering wheel. He knows he shouldn't really be here, but there's just that nagging feeling in his gut that told him it was the right thing to do.

Jacobsen had said no. She's his partner and his superior, so he should be listening to her, but during their conversation that morning, he'd raised his concerns, told her about his gut feeling. And she had basically called him paranoid, told him that Gavin Muir wasn't the type to go 'hired assassin' on people.

The thing is, they already know he's after Jacobsen. She convicted his son, put him in jail for a good 15 years or so. And he's fucking pissed and out for revenge. And Carl is... worried. He knows criminals can become vindictive and unhinged, particularly when family is involved. How is it that Jacobsen doesn't understand that?

The deck of the multi-storey car park is hard to survey, there are too many cars and pillars that obstruct the view, so Carl quietly gets out of the car and ducks behind the boot. Muir's car is two rows over, and he suddenly sees movement there, so he edges closer.

When he gets close enough to overhear the conversation between Muir and two men dressed entirely in black – thankfully the sound bounces off the concrete structure like an echo in the mountains – he suddenly freezes. They're talking about Jacobsen.

He perks up his ears, tries to listen in and he quickly gets the gist of it. They're watching her and they'll strike tonight to make her pay. From his vantage point, he can't see everything, but

what he *can* see is alarming. One of the men shifts to scratch his side, Carl sees the firearm tucked into his waistband. These guys aren't messing around.

Shit. He edges his way back to the car, hoping to stay concealed. When he's in the car, he tries to close the door quietly, then fishes his phone out of his jeans pocket, dialling his partner's number.

It rings, then rings some more. He urgently whispers, "Come on, come on, come on." But she doesn't pick up.

"Fuck," he exhales.

Her voicemail comes on and in a low voice he leaves a quick message to urgently call him back.

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Moira's phone buzzes on the table next to her. She briefly looks at the display, it says 'Morck'.

Christ. This is bad timing. This meeting is important if she wants to move up the ladder. Morck tends to be a little too high maintenance sometimes, probably wants to bully her into more closely surveilling Muir. Yeah, he can wait. She'll call him back later.

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Just to be on the safe side, Carl starts typing a text to Jacobsen when he's startled by a sudden sound next to his car door. Before he can act on it or even consciously realise what is going on, the door is pulled open, a gun pressed to his temple. "Get out," a voice snarls.

Carl can only automatically comply. Funny how when suddenly you're faced with your own mortality, everything becomes really fucking simple.

His phone is snatched from his grip, he's being pushed against the car, one arm painfully yanked behind his back by one of the goons while the other frisks Carl for weapons. He doesn't have any, but they reach into the back pocket of his jeans and take out his police ID.

One of the goons chuckles derisively. "Lookey here. A fucking CID rat. That's just perfect."

The guy pulls Carl back, then pushes him against the side of his car so hard that it jars in his bones. "You work for Jacobsen?"

"Who?" Carl feebly tries to evade.

"Nice try, arsehole. You're a detective. Of course you're working for her."

"I don't know who you're talking about."

"Oh yeah? A little too convenient for you to be here."

"I was picking up meds from the Boots. I'm on my way home, I just got off shift."

"Yeah, you're a bad fucking liar. Tell you what. The three of us, we're gonna go on a little trip." The gun barrel is pressed against the back of his head. "Don't try anything stupid."

He won't. He likes the idea of staying alive, although right now he doesn't know how big his chances are that he'll actually survive this.

Fuck. He should have fucking listened to Jacobsen and gone the fuck home because suddenly it seems like a colossally stupid decision to come here on his own without calling it in. The fuck was he *thinking*?!

He doesn't have time to dwell on any of this because he's being pulled back and pushed in the direction of the other rows of parked cars. Muir is conveniently nowhere to be seen. Did he drive away and Carl missed it? Is he still hanging around, watching the whole thing?

They wrench him to a white delivery van – and *that* is fucking convenient, he thinks. Or maybe apropos. The back door is opened, one guy snarls, "Get in."

Carl tries to resist for a moment, if on instinct more than actual wilfulness. The last thing he feels is something colliding hard with the back of his head. Then his world goes black.

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Thank god the meeting's over, Moira thinks. DCS Primrose really likes to hear himself talk, so of course everything lasted a lot longer than it should have.

She grabs her jacket off the back of her chair and picks up her phone to make her way back to her desk. It's nearing evening, a good number of people have already left for the day when she sits down in her desk chair and unlocks her phone. There's a voicemail waiting for her.

Morck's voice is so low that she has to strain to even hear it. "Muir's got you tailed. They're planning a hit on you tonight. Call me back."

What the hell? She's already dialling Morck's number, her heart suddenly hammering in her chest.

The phone rings and rings. Eventually the voicemail comes on. Shit!

She tries again. Same thing.

Moira is out of her chair now, trying to think who she should mobilise. She should have picked up that call earlier. This night just went to bloody hell. Christ almighty.

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When Carl comes to, it takes him several long seconds to figure out what is going on.

There's dim light. It's cold. His head hurts. A low groan escapes his mouth. Fuck.

He scrambles to sit up, groans again, sensing how his wrists behind his back and his ankles are straining against what feels like zip ties. There's dull pain in his ribcage on his right. Where is he?

He looks around, trying to ignore the throbbing pain in his head. The last remnants of waning daylight filter in through grimy windows twelve or fifteen feet up. It's spacious, some kind of industrial place made of brown brick, probably abandoned. Dust hangs in the air like suspended fog, catching the light in slow-moving particles. There's a smell he can't quite place, maybe yeast mingling with a faint tang of rust and old machinery.

Indistinct outlines on the other side of the room look like hulking silhouettes of giants in the half light. He squints his eyes, his vision momentarily blurring. Does he have a concussion? Fuck. His stomach sinks.

He contemplates yelling for help but rationally knows it'll be futile. These guys were professional guns for hire. They'd know what they're doing. Fuck, he hopes Jacobsen got his message in time.

He tries to assess his situation. What's most important? It'd be fucking awesome if he could get rid of his restraints to move more freely.

It takes a long fucking time for him to wrangle his body through his bound arms so that he has his hands in front of him. The plastic hurts where it cuts into his skin as he writhes his wrists but he soon realises that the cable ties they used are strong, probably something industrial grade. Nothing he can chew through or easily get out off. Shit.

Time becomes a meaningless concept as Carl tries to explore his surroundings. He has to awkwardly do it on his hands and knees, fumbles and gropes around blindly, now that daylight has died away. To his dismay, all he can find are brick walls, bare concrete floor and old metal tanks of some sort that don't seem to have any jagged edges or loose pieces he could use to saw into the zip ties with.

By the time he thinks he's been through the whole place, he has no idea how late it might be. Could be 10 pm, could be midnight, could be 3 am, for all he can tell.

He crawls towards one of the walls and slumps against it. His throat is dry, his mouth is parched and his head is still throbbing in tandem with his elevated heartbeat. He clumsily reaches with his bound hands for where his head hurts the most and can feel that his hair is matted with what is probably dried blood. Just great.

His mind begins to wander. Is Jacobsen still alive? Did they get to her? Are they looking for him?

Would Vic get concerned if he doesn't come home for the night and can't be reached? Probably not, he thinks. He's a copper. She knows something can come up unexpectedly and he might go

off the grid for hours on end. He told her as much when they were discussing Jasper's domestic routine.

He wonders what his own fate will actually be. He thinks it's a good sign they haven't killed him yet. Because if they wanted to completely silence him, they'd have offed him by now. What's their plan for him? Are they just going to leave him here? Are they going to keep him alive until they've dealt with Jacobsen and then decide his destiny? Is he living on borrowed time now?

And what are his chances of being found? He doesn't have his phone on him, so they can't track that. The car is likely still where they left it. What do they have that is actually useful? He squeezes his eyes shut. His brain is all foggy and it makes it hard to think.

Carl must have dozed off at some point, because he snaps to attention when there's a sound from across the room. He blinks against the hazy light that now shines through the windows. He shivers, it's fucking cold.

He can see that the door across the room has opened, two figures dressed in black entering. It's the same goons from before. One is lankier and less buff than the other, but they both look as if they shouldn't be messed with. Particularly not when you have Carl's physique.

One of them is carrying a chair that they set in the middle of the room. The buffer of the two goes to where Carl is still half slumped and yanks him to his feet, then drags him to the chair that he thrusts him into.

Carl tries not to flinch when one of the goons unfolds what looks uncannily like the kind of expandable baton in use with the police force. These guys don't like to get their hands dirty. It makes sense.

"Now," the other guy says. "Let's continue that conversation from yesterday. What do you know about Jacobsen?"

"Nothing. I don't know who that is."

"You're still not a very good liar."

The end of the baton whips into his cheekbone with a velocity and speed Carl hadn't expected. It hurts like fucking shit and he lets out an involuntary yelp.

"Now, let's try that again. What do you know about Jacobsen?"

"Nothing," Carl repeats stubbornly.

The baton hits him again, and even though this time he tries to duck his head, he can't fully evade it. It hits nearer to his temple. He can feel something warm trickling down the side of his face.

They continue this dance once more before they move to his ribs. The first time he tries to protect himself with his arms but realises that was a stupid idea when the baton collides with

his forearm. He moans, hopes it's not broken. He still refuses to talk about the case, though. They'll have to bring something more than violence to the table before he breaks.

The goons seem to realise that at some stage, because they shove him off the chair where Carl collapses onto the ground with a dull thud. They take the chair with them and leave.

He lies there for a long time, curled up, trying to cling to consciousness. The pain in his head is now joined by sharper pain all over his face, his arm and his ribcage. He doesn't want to think about what might be next.

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The Police Caledonia CID floor is a bustle of quiet intensity today. Moira crosses it, takes in the tension on the way to the conference room that they've made into a makeshift command centre of sorts for the occasion. DCS McMillan gives her a sharp look as she enters, then asks, "What have we got?"

Moira sighs. "Not much. An unsent, half-finished text message they managed to extract from Morck's phone that repeats what we already know. No prints on the car, no leads other than the van on the CCTV."

She looks around the room. There are two other detectives there. DI Szikla and DS Hardy, both of whom she regards pretty highly. None of them have worked with Morck before, which she thinks is actually a good thing. It can get tricky when one of your own is involved and people are personally attached.

Hardy gets up and points to a map that they've put up on a whiteboard. There are several spots marked with a blue dot. He outlines the pattern with his finger. "This is the route we've been able to trace for the van. The trail stops here."

He points to one of the dots on the map. "I'm looking into possible links to Muir in the area, but so far I'm poking around in the dark. It's not a lot to go on."

Yeah, Moira thinks. It isn't. Yet, she tells him, "That's good. Stay on that."

Szikla cuts in, "We're surveilling Muir now, but I'm afraid that's also been without result so far."

Hardy adds, "Nothing from the local hospitals, either. Which might be good news."

Moira sighs. "Or it might not. If these were professionals..."

McMillan tells her, "Let's not assume the worst."

Moira goes to the map, looks at the blue dot again. "We should go out there, do some good old canvassing."

McMillan shoots her a sharp look. "You're not going anywhere. We mustn't forget that Muir has put a hit on you."

She has to hold back a hearty *fuck* that she wants to hiss. Yes, there is that, too. “Still,” she says, “send a few folks out there. Doesn’t have to be me.”

“To do what? That’s a pretty big area to just randomly canvas.”

“For god’s sake, Jonathan. We can’t just do nothing! Morck’s one of ours.”

“Yes, I’m well aware of that.”

Hardy harrumphs, then goes back to where he sat before and gathers up the papers that lie there. “If you don’t need me any longer, I’ll go and start digging.”

McMillan nods at him, then indicates to Szikla to leave as well. He turns to Moira. “Help Hardy with the research. We’ve already had one officer’s recklessness turn sideways. That’s quite enough for one day, don’t you think?”

She wants to spit something acerbic at her supervisor, but she knows he’s right, so she turns on her heel and goes to find Hardy. She doesn’t have any other smart ideas either right now, so looking for potential links to Muir is probably their best bet right now.

When she gets to Hardy’s desk, he looks up at her. “Has anyone informed Morck’s wife?”

Shit. Why hasn’t she thought of that? “Not that I know of.”

Hardy gets up. “Alright. I’ll do it.”

Moira nods. “You know her?”

Hardy shrugs. “No. He mentioned her the other day. Has a stepson, too. Wee sprog, think he’s eight or nine.”

Moira’s attention perks up at this. Morck transferred up here half a year ago. He came highly recommended, although the department quickly had to learn that his personality was a bit of an acquired taste.

It’s curious Hardy would know that about him. Morck’s usually pretty tight-lipped about his personal life and definitely not the type to dump family details on colleagues.

“Before you go, tell me what you’ve got so far. I’d like to keep looking.”

He nods, then takes her through what he’s already looked at. She has to admit it’s solid work and definitely better than anything else they’ve got so far. She goes back to her own desk to dig some more.

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Carl doesn’t know how long he lies on the cold concrete floor. He thinks he probably might have dozed off for a bit, too.

When he wakes up, everything hurts. His wrists and ankles are still bound. He's still thirsty as hell.

He groans loudly as he pushes his battered body into a kneeling position. A quick surveillance of the room tells him several things. As he previously suspected, there is nothing here other than floor, walls and two massive tanks that he thinks might have been used for brewing at some stage. They're derelict now and have not been in use in a very long time.

The windows are all way high up, farther than he could reach even if he wasn't restrained. There is absolutely nothing here he can see that might help with his situation.

His eyes scan the rest of the room in hopes that maybe they are actually invested in him staying alive, that maybe they put a bottle of water by the door. He is not so lucky, however. What also becomes a problem is that he needs to pee. If he does that in a corner in here, it's gonna reek. He's not looking forward to that scenario. Maybe he can hold it a bit longer.

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Moira would love to say that it was her who figured it out, but the crucial clue was actually provided by Hardy. He'd dug up documentation somewhere that tied Muir to a local brewery out in Dalkeith near where the van had gone off the grid, one that is now abandoned.

They presented it to McMillan and he'd sent a team out there right away. Moira had insisted she needed to be there, and McMillan hadn't said no.

On the way there, in the passenger seat of the police car steered by Hardy, she prays that the lead will pay off, that they'll find Morck – and find him alive. Unharmed, if possible, even though that seems less likely.

Because the truth is, this is all *her* fault. Morck had voiced concerns about Muir, about his intentions. She'd dismissed it as paranoid. And even though he went after Muir solo, he'd tried to call her, and she ignored it. Ignored it out of her own career ambitions. What a bloody selfish thing to do.

She also knows now that she massively underestimated Muir and his hunger for revenge. And Morck had paid the price, whatever that price may be.

As they drive, she asks Hardy how the conversation with Morck's wife went. He shrugs and tells her as expected. It's never great to be the bearer of bad news, but he says she stayed level-headed and rational. Moira hopes that they won't have to bring more bad news at a later stage.

When they get to the brewery building, it seems abandoned. There are no cars, no people. Moira can't decide whether that's a good or a bad thing.

They all don ballistic vests to be on the safe side. Hardy and Moira hang back and watch from a safe distance as the specialised armed response team prepares for whatever they might walk into. McMillan drilled into them that this has to go by the books.

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It must have been hours now since the goons left. Carl can't quite tell how fast time is passing, his brain seems to have lodged in a weird state of limbo between haziness and acute sensation of pain that it randomly switches between.

Something makes him jerk to full wakefulness. Noises from the door. He lifts his head off the ground, tries to focus, fails at it. He thinks maybe one of his eyes is now partly swollen shut.

A group of people enter, all dressed in black. There's something vaguely familiar about it. They make movements with their arms. Someone says something that sounds like, "Contact front – one down."

People move in his direction, he finally identifies what they are. Some kind of armed response team. They found him. Fucking finally. Fuck yes.

Someone steps closer, crouches by his side, Carl eyes the patch that says POLICE across his chest. "DI Morck?"

"Yes," he rasps.

The officer reaches for something, then Carl feels the zip ties around his wrists and ankles snap away.

"Can you sit up?"

His voice is gravelly. "I can try."

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It takes an agonisingly long time until Moira and Hardy hear the radio crackling to life. "Officer located and conscious but request an ambulance for medical assessment. Scene is secure."

Moira lets out an audible sigh of relief. He's alive!

Hardy smiles at her. This is good news.

She leaves Hardy where he is and jogs to the entrance of the building. Inside, a few members of the response team are still milling about but she only has eyes for her partner. He's sitting on the ground, someone crouching next to him.

"Morck," she says as she nears him.

He looks up at her, and she has to try not to flinch at the sight. There's dried blood over one side of his face and neck. Dark red and purple bruises adorn his face, one eye is visibly swollen and what she can still see of it is bloodshot. He looks like he's been through hell and back.

"Jesus," she hisses.

And as if that's a small miracle, he actually gives her a lopsided grin. "Your timing could have been better."

"Christ, Morck. You alright?" Then she realises how stupid that question is as she crouches next to him. "Of course you're not alright. An ambulance is on its way."

She signals to the response team officer that he can leave now. Morck shifts his weight to be a little more upright but audibly groans. "Might as well call me Carl."

She weighs that in her head, then says, "Carl."

He grins again. "Even more charming with the Scottish accent."

"What happened?"

He swallows visibly. "Can I get some water?"

"Of course." She activates her radio, asks for someone to bring them some water.

While they wait, he hoarsely says, "Muir's hired guns grabbed me. Took me here. Roughed me up to extract information. Did you get my message?"

"Aye. Do you know who took you?"

"No. They're professional hit-men. Doubt you'll catch them."

Someone comes and holds a bottle of water out to Carl, which he takes with unsteady hands. Moira can see that his wrists have red, raw ligature marks. Bloody hell, what kind of ordeal has he just been through?

Carl's hands are shaking, she can see that he has trouble opening the water bottle so she gently takes it from him. "Here, let me help with that."

The plastic cap makes cracking noises as she opens the bottle and she hands it to Carl who lifts it to his mouth with unsteady hands. He gulps down half of it in ravenous swigs until he doubles over and starts coughing.

"Easy," she tells him, guiding a gentle hand to his back.

When he's composed himself enough, he straightens up, his face grimacing in pain.

"Where are you hurt? Other than this?" She points at his face.

"Arm. Ribs," he simply says, still trying to catch his breath.

"They kick you?"

"No. Baton."

Shit. She doesn't even wanna think about it. Thankfully, they can now hear approaching sirens. That has to be the ambulance. "Hang in there," she tells Carl. "We'll talk more about this later."

“Moira,” he calls after her when she straightens up.

She looks at him and he tells her, “Muir’s still after you.”

“I know. We’re watching him.”

“I recorded it,” he says.

“On your phone?”

“Yeah.”

“It was damaged pretty badly but I’ll tell them to prioritise possible recordings.”

He gives her a little nod and Moira makes room for the ambulance techs to tend to Carl, watches warily as they help him onto the trolley that they’ve rolled inside, then follows them outside to watch how they assess Carl and then load him into the ambulance.

Hardy sidles up to her. “He alright?”

“Alright may be pushing it, but yeah, he should be fine. They roughed him up quite a bit.”

Hardy just nods, then points to his car. “Should let his wife know.”

“Aye,” she says. “They’re taking him to Royal Infirmary.”

“Okay. I’ll let her know.”

She gently touches his arm. “Thanks.”

He gives her a small smile. “Sure.”

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Carl hates this part. He’s never been a fan of hospitals. The ambulance ride was uncomfortable enough, the poking and prodding in A&E even more so.

He’s being put in a hospital gown, then a CT scanner he fucking hates. There’s too much waiting, but at least now he has access to potent painkillers. They make the whole thing a little more bearable.

They clean up his face, suture and dress his wounds. His injured arm is put in some kind of plastic splint. He has to answer a million questions about potential injuries, winces at the ugly purple bruises on his ribcage, then wonders what his face actually looks like. It can’t be pretty.

He’s finally told they’re admitting him for monitoring, then he’s asked to transfer to a bed with which they wheel him into an elevator.

When they’ve settled him into a room upstairs, it doesn’t take long for Vic to knock and enter. He can see the shock on her face that she quickly tries to hide as she lays eyes on him.

“Oh, love,” she says as she strides to his bedside.

He tries to give her an encouraging smile that probably falls short and holds out his hand as she reaches for it. “Don’t exactly look my best,” he jokes.

She smiles back but he can see that she’s not happy. Of course she’s not. He must look fucking horrible. She looks around and moves the chair that stands off to the side closer to the bed.

“Are you in a lot of pain?”

“Nah, they put me on the good stuff.” He points to an IV drip next to his bed.

“What happened?”

He tries to weigh his answer in his mind. He’s always vowed not to bring the job home, not to mingle his professional life with his private one. He doesn’t want the horrors of criminality to invade and rule what he considers his safe space, his home.

That’s why he opts for a careful half-truth. “Got tangled up in something. You know, wrong place, wrong time.”

“Aye, DS Hardy told me as much.”

He frowns, but yeah, that makes sense that someone would have already appraised her of the situation. He’s glad it was Hardy. He seems like a good bloke – one of the more sensible ones up here. “What did they tell you?”

“That you had gone missing as part of a case they were investigating and they were looking for you. Got the call an hour ago that you’ve been taken here.”

Well. As far as Carl is concerned, she doesn’t need to know more than that. “Yeah. I think they wanna keep me for a day or two. Can’t say I love the idea.”

“Can’t say I love the idea, either, but judging by the state of you, it might not be the worst thing.”

“Yeah,” he sighs.

“How bad is it?”

He repeats what he can recall they told him. “Concussion, bruised ribs, hairline fracture of the ulna. And, you know…” He points vaguely to his face. “…this.”

“That sounds pretty horrible.”

“I’ll live.”

She smiles at him again. “You better.”

“Jasper okay?”

She nods. “Yeah. Mum’s looking after him.”

“Did you tell him?”

“No, not yet. I’ll talk to him tonight.”

“I don’t wanna scare him.”

“Oh, I know. Don’t worry, we’ll figure it out.”

He’s only known Jasper for a year and a half, but loath as he is to admit it, the boy’s found a special place in his heart.

Vic squeezes his hand again and he tells her, “Yeah, we will.”

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By the time that the workday comes to an end, Moira wants to pound her head into her keyboard. The endless debriefing and paperwork after the incident would be trying for anyone’s patience, and Moira doesn’t exactly have it in abundance today.

It’s nearly 6 pm when she leaves the station, and she knows what her next port of call is going to be.

At Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, she asks for Carl’s room number, then makes her way there. When she knocks on his door, he greets her with a tired expression that may or may not mean she just roused him from a much needed slumber. It makes her feel guilty all over again.

The bruises all over his face look even harsher in the white hospital light and stand out in stark blueish purple against his pale skin. There’s a white adhesive dressing on his temple near his eyebrow. One arm is in a splint.

She gives him a smile. “Morck,” she greets him.

He smiles back. “Did I imagine that we were on a first name basis? I mean, it’s entirely possible, seeing how apparently I’ve been clubbed over the head pretty hard.”

“No, sorry,” she shrugs apologetically. “Old habits.”

He gestures at the chair next to his bed and she sits down. The fact that he can give her sarcastic quips is definitely a good sign but doesn’t entirely erase the uneasy, lingering remorse she still feels. He got significantly injured because of her, because she failed him in her police officer’s duty.

“How are you feeling?” she tentatively asks.

“Oh, you know. Painkillers are a wonderful invention.”

“You gave us all a pretty good scare.”

His face darkens slightly but he doesn’t answer, so Moira adds, “I’m glad you got out of there alive, but what you did was pretty reckless.”

His mouth twitches. “Wouldn’t have had to be if you’d listened to me in the first place.”

"Yes, I know, and that's my cross to bear. Should have answered my bloody phone, too."

"Did you get the recording?"

"Yes, IT pulled it off your phone. Muir has been arrested. It's all done."

He nods once. "Good."

"Still, Carl. That's not how we do things up here. I'm your bloody partner. You don't do stupid crap like that on your own on a bloody whim."

"It wasn't a whim," he retorts in a raised voice.

"It was a gut feeling. You said so yourself."

"And it turned out to be right."

"Yeah, and it nearly got you killed in the process."

"Now you're being overly dramatic."

She bristles. "Am I? You said yourself they were professionals. They might have easily come back and killed ye if we hadn't found ye. Tell me I'm wrong about this."

She looks at him and he glares back at her, but she can tell that he doesn't have much in terms of contradictory arguments. Instead, he asks her a question. "How'd you find me?"

"We traced the white van to near Dalkeith. It was Hardy who found the link between Muir and the abandoned brewery. Very good detective, Hardy is."

He stays silent for a long moment, then asks her, "Am I in trouble?"

She shakes her head. "Nah. I smoothed it over with McMillan. You'll be fine."

She wonders if it was the right thing to do. She's a firm believer in people owning up to their mistakes. But Carl had put his life on the line for her, and that's more important than anything else in her book.

She gives him a long look. "Carl."

He meets her gaze and she says, "You saved my life. Thank you."

His mouth twitches into the smallest of bashful smiles, then he says in a low voice. "You're welcome."

Nothing more has to be said on the matter and she's glad they have Carl on their team now, even though she can tell he's going to be a massive pain in her arse. But what Moira knows with great certainty is that, were the roles reversed, she'd do the same thing and protect her partner at all cost.

Well, maybe minus the reckless free-soloing.

She looks at all the medical equipment around him, then at his face. His eyelids are a little droopy. He looks exhausted. “Maybe I should let you get some rest. I’ll be back tomorrow to take your official statement.”

“Okay,” he says in a low voice.

She gets up from her chair and tells him, “Alright, Carl. Take it easy.”

He just grunts noncommittally, his eyes already closed.

She’ll have to keep a closer eye on Carl. And maybe save him from himself next time before he can dive headlong into something stupid.