

## Chapter 5 – Parental revelation

When Hughie entered the car into the passenger seat, he could already see the disapproving look on Butcher's face. Of course, ever the asshole he is he had to say *"So kid, how was the shag with the supe? I see you are still alive, already luckier than I would have reckoned."*

Hughie scowled at the British man. Usually he would accept it, but like he said to Annie, she draws the best parts of himself even when she wasn't near. So, he spoke with a firm tone *"Don't talk about Annie like that. I get what Homelander did to your family, and you deserve justice for that, that's why I help you."*

Butcher rolled his eyes before saying *"What, so one shag with a supe and now you are on their team? If we kill Homelander you go back to be a fucking fan of those cunts?"*

Hughie was frustrated. *"No Butcher. I believe in what we do, I believe Vought should go down in flames. But supes are people. There are bad, and there good, there are Homelanders and there are Starlights. Like there are murderers and cops. We can't go killing all the supes, just because one fucked our lives. How does it make us any better?"*

Butcher frowned, seeming to consider his words, but apparently was way too of an asshole to go out without a parting shot *"Remind me who it was that killed Translucent? 'cause I know for sure it ain't me."*

Hughie glared at the man and was about to snap at him, but then he jumped at his seat as a boot came from the back seat to kick Butcher's headrest, causing the British to shout *"Oi! I am driving."*

Hughie looked at the back seat to see Kimiko resting across the three seats, no wonder he missed her before. He let out a breath he didn't know he was holding before saying *"Damn Kimiko, you scared me shitless."* The female just smiled and waved to him.

Hughie shook his head with a small smile, before remembering Butcher comment. He returned to glare at the man and said *"Yes, I did it. But I didn't do it to kill a supe. Like I told Annie, I killed him because I knew that if I let him go we were all dead. You, Frenchie..."*

Hughie was cut off when Kimiko sat up, coming to his view, looking at him oddly. And then Butcher's voice filled the car *"Wait a bloody minute. Starlight knows?! You told her?!"*

Hughie just gave him a firm nod *“Were you pissed or something? How the hell are you still alive kid, or not at Vought’s guest prison?”*

Hughie took a deep breath to reply *“First her name is Annie. She isn’t just a supe, maybe remembering it will help you accept her as a person too. And she would never kill me! I admit she wanted to arrest me, especially after realizing we were using her for info, but she gave me the chance to explain. And when she knew the entire truth, she still chose to trust me...”*

Butcher cut him off again *“Now you got to be shitting me. You told her all the fucked-up things we did, and she still dating you kid?”* Another firm nod caused the older man to chuckle *“I’m not sure if it’s making one of you bloody insane, or me bloody impressed with your shagging abilities.”*

When Hughie noticed Kimiko’s nodding head, he shook his head, exasperated with the duo. *“Guys it’s not like that. Annie is just a good person and...”*

This time when Hughie was cut it was his ringtone’s fault. Looking down at his screen he saw ‘Dad’ written as the caller ID. Confused, he answered on speaker, asking *“Dad? Are you okay?”*

Hughie was startled when another familiar voice, definitely not his father, answered *“That’s depending on you Hughie.”*

*“A-train! What did you do to my dad?!”* Hughie demanded with both anger and trepidation.

Butcher pulled the car over, now very much interested in the call, Kimiko leaned forward as if to hear better. Then A-train’s voice spoke again *“Nothing yet. But you better come home before I get bored babysitting him.”* All three of them noticed how his voice was coming between short breaths *“And Hughie, alone! Or dear dad ends up exactly like your previous girlfriend.”*

Now Hughie’s breath became quite short too as he responded *“Y-Yhea, Ok man. J-Just don’t hurt him.”*

The call was cut than.

There was a moment of silence before Butcher slammed a fist to the wheel and said *“Fuck! You don’t actually plan to go alone kid, right? ‘cause he will just kill you and then your dad before running on his marry way.”*

Hughie already figured it out himself. He jerked his head around, in his desperation he thought about calling Annie for help, but she had problems of her own right now. His desperation grew until his eyes locked on the store across the street, then they moved on to Kimiko in the back seat. A small smile spread on his face, *“I’ve got a plan.”*

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It took Hughie almost another hour to get back home. When he entered the apartment, his dad immediately jumped on him *“Hughie, are you okay? This gentleman tells me you are in trouble.”*

*“Oh, he is in trouble all right.”* The speedster said menacingly as he advanced threateningly at him.

Hughie pushed his dad behind him and replied angrily *“I came here alone like you said, so now let him go and you can do whatever you want with me.”*

His dad protested *“I not leaving you with him son.”*

A-train raised a skeptical brow, before speeding away. He returned a couple seconds later laughing *“Wow you actually came alone. How stupid are you?”*

Hughie glared at the supe for a moment before turning to his dad. He put one hand on his shoulder and used his other one to slip his dad a note without A-train noticing. *“You have to leave now dad.”* He said firmly.

His dad nodded, clearly confused, but left nonetheless. The moment the door was closed Hughie heard a ‘Woosh’ sound from behind him and saw A-train dumping all his collectibles on the dining table. *“Look at all that. You weren’t just a fan, you were like a super fan. What happened Hughie?”* The member of the seven said smugly, holding a very rare action figure of himself Hughie paid a lot of money for, and once was very proud of.

In this cases Hughie resorts to stammering and pleading usually, he knew that he changed since meeting Annie and Butcher. Both of them pushed him in ways he didn’t imagine and caused him to build his confidence. He also knows that this morning did a lot to advance

this progress even farther, thanks to Annie's acceptance after knowing the entire truth. And still he surprised even himself by responding with a deadpan voice *"I met you and heard you opening your fucking mouth."*

A-train gave out a chilling, humorless laugh and before Hughie could even blink, he was pushed into the wall of the kitchen that just a moment before was on the opposite side of the apartment from where they stood.

With the supe so close to him Hughie noticed for the first time in person, the short breaths he heard on the phone, and not only that, but his face was also covered in sweat as well. Hughie recognized withdrawal symptoms and realized now that they effectively cut him off when they freed Kimiko and took all the supply in that lair. He felt relief, after all the second part of his plan depend on the fact A-train didn't inject himself before coming here.

But Hughie's relief was short lived, as the face of the speedster contracted with fury screamed *"I'm going to enjoy this."*

*"Wait!"* Hughie screamed to get through the supes anger. He slowly pulled out a vial from his pocket, filled with light blue liquid. A-train eyes widened, and he looked longingly at the vial. His gloved hand began reaching for it slowly.

With an inner smirk Hughie let go of the vial. The glass shattered on contact and the blue liquid spilled all over the floor. A-train let go of Hughie, looking with shock to the blue puddle beneath them. His shock quickly turned into outrage as he began to pace around the kitchen, shouting *"What the fuck man?! Do you know what you just did?!"*

Hughie faced hardened, he needed to make sure A-train keeps his focus on him. With a taunting voice he replied, *"Got rid of your only chance to be faster than shockwave."*

That did the work, as A-train's face were clouded again, and he locked his furious eyes on Hughie. But before the supe could hurt him Hughie talked quickly *"But I know where you could find more. A lot more. This vial was just to prove I know where to get the rest."*

A-train's eyes scanned over Hughie's form before asking in his short breathed voice *"What the catch?"*

Hughie shrugged and responded, *"I do have one demand."* He saw that A-train was about to protest, so he added quickly *"Tell me what is better? The rush or knowing that as long as you take it you are the fastest man alive?"*

A-train looked at him in shock. At him, not at the V. Was it a shock of how much Hughie knew or because he had the balls to pull this kind of move? Hughie didn't know, and he didn't really care. From the corner of his eye, he could see Kimiko silently landing from the vent to the floor and start walking slowly and quietly toward them without the supe noticing.

Shock turned into agony as A-train asked desperately *"What is it man? I killed your old girlfriend, so you killed mine?! I don't know what you so angry for, you clearly upgraded since then."*

Hughie frowned. Upgraded? Does he talk about Annie? And if he knows than so is Vought and the rest of the seven. Hughie felt glad right now that he managed to convince Annie to go to her mother's instead of the tower today. He will have to call her after this over to warn her about Vought. But another part confused Hughie as well. A-train's girlfriend is dead? As far as he knows Butcher didn't have any plans to do it. *"Popclaw? We didn't kill her."*

A-train seemed to lose his mind as he screamed *"She had a name! It was Charlotte! You used her and then throw her away like garbage! I- I had to kill her."*

Hughie eyes widened and suddenly he began to feel nervous, especially so when the angry supe began to move toward him stiffly saying *"Because of you I had to, so I am going to... AHHHHHH!"*

Before the speedster could take another step or finish his threat, Kimiko showed behind him as if out of nowhere and used a crowbar to hit his leg with all her strength. And considering she was a supe herself meant a lot. A-train landed on the floor screaming in pain and looking at his leg that now had a bone sticking out of its skin. He saw Kimiko and spat at her *"YOU BITCH!"* Then he turned to Hughie and snarled *"I hope they will kill your new girlfriend slower than I did your last one."*

Hughie nervousness and hesitation were gone, replace by worry and fury. He walked closer to the so-called hero and demanded *"Annie? Who is trying to kill her?"*

A-train smirked through his pain and taunted Hughie *“Did you really think Vought or Homelander will let that bitch Starlight stay alive after helping you?”*

Hughie eyes narrowed at him and demanded again *“She didn’t help us! Why do you all think she did?”*

The supe kept the obnoxious smirk on his face but didn’t answer. Hughie’s mind clouded. All he could see was Annie, her dead body if Vought got to her first. Without realizing what he was doing he threw himself at the man on the floor. Hughie put his weight on the broken leg and his hands found their way around the dark skin of the man’s neck, choking him.

A-train’s eyes bulged out of their sockets. His mouth opened in a scream of agony, but no sound was passing his lips as Hughie kept putting more pressure to the hands around his neck. Hughie paid none of this any mind, not even to the shocked Kimiko standing few steps away from them, as he snarled back at the speedster *“you better tell me everything you know about what they are planning for Annie, or I will kill you just like I did Translucent. Do you understand?”*

Hughie let go of the man’s throat enough for him to move his head, but in return he increased the amount of pressure he put on the broken leg.

A-train screamed in pain again, before nodding his head quickly. The moment Hughie let go of the man’s neck, the supe began talking between gasps of pain *“Her m-mom called Vought just before you came in here. Said S-Starlight just come to visit her. V- Vought said they will send a team to bring them i-in. All I know, I-I swear.”*

Hughie still felt like choking the life out the man. For Robin, for his dad and for everyone he killed and then lied about it. But before he could he felt a pair of arms pulling him away from the speedster.

When Hughie was back on his feet Kimiko stood in front of him, blocking the view of the man on the floor. She pointed to his phone and then to the door before giving him an urgent look. Hughie remembered Annie and the dangerous both her and her mother is in before nodding to the female supe with a grateful smile.

Hughie pulled out his phone and began calling Annie even as they both walked out the door. Leaving A-train whimpering on the kitchen floor.

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The plan was that after his dad find Butcher in the car using the instruction in the note, he slipped him, Butcher will drive to the entrance of the building in case they will need a quick gateway. Hughie was happy for that now.

Butcher looked as Kimiko entered the back seat next to his dad and he sat back in the passenger seat. Butcher smirked when he saw the blood staining Hughie's pants, asking *"So the fast cunt is dead?"*

He heard his dad gasp in horror. Hughie ignored it and replied *"No Butcher, he isn't dead. But he won't be running around for a few days if not weeks."* Hughie smirked and added *"You owe me 10 bucks by the way, he totally bought that the colored water was the V."*

Butcher snorted, then looked at Hughie and asked frowning *"Well then what have you so nervous now kid?"*

Hughie let out a frustrated sigh *"A-train said Vought knows about me and Annie, they are sure she helped killed Translucent and do everything else. They sent a team to her mother's place. He said they are planning to Kill her. I tried calling, texting, but she doesn't answer. And I have no fucking idea where her mother lives."*

Butcher shrugged *"Let the cunts kill each other."* Hughie glared with him with so much anger he felt like he was burning, Kimiko gave the British a smack upside his head. *"Oi! Fine! Does your supe girlfriend still has the bug on the phone?"*

Hughie eyes widened and he nodded. While at the same time his dad asked *"Girlfriend?"*

Butcher sighed, pulled his phone out of his coat and played around with the screen for a few moments. When he mounted his phone on the dashboard the screen displays a map, with a blue dot signaling their location and a red dot for Annie's. Without another word Butcher began driving. Hughie could only hope that they won't be too late. For the rest of the drive Hughie's eyes kept jumping from Butcher's screen to make sure Annie's point isn't moving, to his own, hoping Annie will text or call.

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Annie wasn't sure what she expected her mother to say, all she knew is that she wanted it to make sense. She didn't believe Hughie tried to lie, he thought he knew the truth, but there had to be a better explanation.

When Annie entered the apartment, her mother was in the kitchen, talking on the phone with a worried look on her face. Annie was about to ask what's was going on, but when her mom saw her the worried look turned into a happy one. She said a few words into the phone Annie couldn't hear before hanging up.

Her mom washed her hands and come to the living room, hugging Annie while saying *"Oh sweetheart, what a nice surprise."*

Annie hugged her back *"Hi mom. I really need to talk to you about something."* She said before looking at the table with the two chairs in the corner of the room and added *"We should sit for that."*

Her mom gave her a confused smile but followed her to sit down. Annie was nervous and apparently her mom could see it because she took Annie's hand in her and asked softly *"What is it honey?"*

Annie took a deep breath and said *"It's about Compound V..."*

Before she could finish her mother pulled her hand away as if burned and turned in her chair to stand up, clearing her throat she said weakly *"Drinks... I forgot to offer you a drink honey. What about some tea?"*

Annie's eyes narrowed at her mom. She looked as the older woman began walking toward the kitchen, but Annie stopped her with her voice *"Mom? Did you know about the Compound V?"*

Her mom leaned on the counter separating the kitchen and the living room, before asking quietly *"Why did Vought tell you?"*

Annie's breath hitched. She couldn't believe it. *"Told me what mom?!"* She demanded weakly.

Her mom turned back to face her even more confused *"If you know about the drug, you know about the babies too. Don't you?"*

Annie sank into her seat with her head in her hands *"So it is true."*

Her mom sat back across her *"Why would you think Vought was lying to you?"*



Annie's eyes narrowed at her mother from behind her hands as she responded evenly *"Vought didn't bother to tell me, Hughie did."*

Her mother tilted her head slightly *"Hughie?"*

Annie absently nodded, still processing that Hughie was right. She wasn't born a supe, she was created, filled with drugs as a baby. She barely heard herself replying to her mother *"My boyfriend. He discovered it couple days ago and told me today..."* She trailed off when the penny finally dropped in her head.

Annie removed the hands from her face, revealing a pair of glaring eyes aimed straight at the older woman *"And you knew too..."* She began slowly *"You knew that all this time, and lied to me just like Vought did."*

Her anger was beginning to consume her now, ignoring her mother attempts to calm her down she yelled *"You let them inject drugs into me as a baby! Let them turn me into something different without thinking how it will affect me in the future. Because you didn't care!"*

Her mother was shaking her head *"No Annie, it's not true. They told me it will make you special, unique. They promised opportunities for you that no one else could give. That's what I wanted for you, always. Of course I care, I love you honey."*

But Annie was furious *"Yes, loved me so much you were lying to me my entire life!"* She countered sarcastically. Then continued with pure venom *"You made the choice and reaped the benefits afterwards. When I was a kid, you would wake me up every day in 5 am to train for those pageants. You said then too it was all for me, but all I got from them was misery. You spent my whole life telling me I was chosen by God to do good and that's why we should worship him, knowing every moment of that was a load of shit. And you kept pushing me to believe it just few weeks ago in that fucking expo."*

Annie was breathing heavily at that point and ignored the tears streaming down her mother's cheeks. The older woman sobbed and whispered *"We wanted what was best for you..."*

Then another realization hit Annie. She jumped from her seat and began pacing the living room. *"That's why dad left isn't it?"* She accused her mom.

The seating woman looked up at that, not as ashamed as she was a moment ago. *“He agreed to it as well at first. But then he changed his mind, and left, not knowing what to do with a super child. But for me you were always special, and I loved you more for that.”* The memory caused her to hiss in anger.

Annie shook her head. Her entire world was crashing down, and she didn't know what to do. *“Yhea, because you had to have a special child so much, you sold her to a drug company so they could give her a drug you never heard about. But it was all worth it, wasn't it? You created the daughter you always wanted for yourself. It doesn't matter what I had to suffer, as long as you had your perfect superhero daughter! The only person who accepted me as myself from the first moment we met is Hughie...”*

Hughie! Yes. She needs to talk to him, he's the only one that can make any sense out of this all bullshit. She pulled her phone out of her pocket. Her eyes widened at the number of missed calls and unread messages. 3 calls from Vought, with another 2 messages. But what worried her was the 7 calls and 5 urgent messages from Hughie. She was about to open them first, but that was when the entrance door exploded inwards.