Sometimes, all we want is a better life.

We just don't know how to go about getting it.





The Empire, The Calamity, & The Catalyst

“You keep this up, and I’m going to call you Glue-cy.”

“Excuse you?” Lucy placed her hands on her hips and narrowed her gaze at her whiny, British BFF for life. “And what is **that** supposed to mean?”

Sebastian Everett Bryce the de-hyphenated shot a protruding glance at his blonde-haired, wiry framed cohort. The air around them, frigid. The ground around them? Covered in snow. All of the fuzzy crocheted scarves and wool blazers in Seb's massive walk-in closet couldn't fix the fact that Canada boasted some of the ungodliest temperatures and wind chills that mankind has ever had the displeasure of experiencing. If tonight were Christmas, Santa Claus himself would think twice about making the trip.

"Your incessant need for team building exercises." He said, his breath spewing out like plumes of white smoke with each syllable. "And how far you're willing to take them."

"Is this about Colonel Cluck? The Haunted House? Or the corn maze?"

"*Yes*," Seb replied, huddled with his arms folded close to the chest, rubbing to keep warm. "Let us not forget to add this latest venture to the list."

Lucy rolled her eyes. "How conveniently you forget the Crocs thing. *That* was all ***you***."

"That's... not even close to us being even. Shall I mention what I caught you doing in that corn maze?"

"*What*? Or *Who*?" She smirked. "How about when you... Oh, I dunno... *nearly unravelled time itself*?"

"I'm starting to wish I had." He replied with a shiver. "I am willing to bet every last pound in every account in my name that oblivion isn't this cold."

"Oh, would you chill out already?"

Sebastian scoffed. "We're *way* past that, *Glue-cy*."

"It's not *that* cold." Lucy persisted, ignoring the ample snark in her best friend's voice. "..And besides, team-building *is* important. Don't act like you haven't arranged something like this in the past–"

"I most certainly have not!"

Lucy stomped her foot. "Have to! What about that whole 'Seb the asshole presents Team/Cooperative strategy for dummies' thing you did with Corey and I?"

Seb narrows his gaze at his BFF. "That was different."

"It was not! Just admit it, you're as guilty as I am when it comes to team building."

Instead of answering outright, Seb pulled his scarf tighter over his mouth area and muttered something incoherent into it. Lucy rolled her eyes and poked him, to which he mumbled something else.

"*Come on, Seb*. This means a lot to me.. I've been looking forward to you meeting Maggie for a while now."

"I thought her name was Aurora." Seb replied, pulling his scarf away from his face and immediately regretting it.

"It is. I guess. I don't really know. It was Maggie back when her and I-"

He raised a hand in the air, stopping Lucy mid-thought. "Please, I don't need *another* visual."

"*I'll give you another visual*." Lucy grumbled as she crossed her arms over her chest, defiant.

Seb raised his eyebrows at her, but she simply shrugged in response - prompting another sigh out of the Chelsea Crippler. "Listen, BFF.. I'm not saying I don't want to meet the '*other partner*'.. All I'm saying is: Why can't I meet her someplace else? Preferably somewhere with a fireplace and tea. Lots of nice, hot, te–."

"Listen, Mister Rosy Cheek Lemon," Lucy interrupted him, motioning at the festival that was going on around them. "Toronto has a world-class, world-renowned holiday festival and we just happen to be booked to appear... you guessed it... right **here** in Toronto. It's an experience that I want to share with you... if you can get the popsicle out of your ass long enough to give it a chance."

Sebastian couldn't have looked more offended if he tried. His eyes widened and a hand came up to his chest, and if Lucy hadn't already known better - She'd have thought he was preparing to

storm off. But he didn't. Instead, he narrowed his glare right into the eyes of his best friend and pulled his jacket even tighter around him.

"I think what has me is the fact that you act as though you couldn't be arsed at all." He chuckled as his teeth chattered. "Look at you. Freezing cold and you're perfectly fine going to a bloody outdoor festival. You don't even have your damn jacket zipped up. Not that it matters anyway; all those holes. You look like the mothman's buffet."

"Are you done?"

Offense turned to disappointment in mere seconds as Lucy shed his weak jabs like she was the mothman's prizefighter instead. Seb sighed. "For the moment."

"Good, she should be here soon." Lucy patted Seb on the shoulder as she began to look around the crowd for Aurora.

There's no shortage of methods we're willing to try to get that better life.

Beg, borrow, steal, control, hurt, love, **kill**.

We don't worry ourselves too much about the consequences of an endeavor so pure.

A better life is worth everything.

Worth *anything*.

There was no shortage of Christmas in Toronto.

Truly, some of the greatest light festivals and displays were taking place in the province of Ontario, and as such the best, and frankly only, time to partake of such an event begins after sundown.

What was once a frigid landscape only seemed to get colder, but the night sky was clear and the moon bright and full. The wind seemed to calm down, other than the occasional slight breeze, and at the very least that seemed to make being outdoors a bit more bearable. Of course, there were people around, frozen ponds hosted holiday ice skating events basking in the multi-colored glow of the garland and string light adorned conifers around its perimeter. Children laughing and the consistent murmur of the conversing adults encapsulated what a joyous moment this was for the local population.

In the distance, a Silver-haired girl stood alone with her back lightly resting on a nearby wall of the main hall building. She just so happened to glance up at the exact moment that Lucy noticed her. She, too, was dressed warmly, but much like the locals, didn't have the same red-tipped nose or blue lips that Lucy and Sebastian had. Lucy motioned for her, and she seemed anxious to come at first but still managed to meander her way over to them.

Aurora kept her gaze downward toward the footprints several hundred pairs of boots had made in the fresh snow.

"Uhm, hi."

Lucy, having dealt with Sebsastian's shit up until this point, welcomed Aurora's presence as she wrapped her arm over Aurora's shoulders and pulled her into what was now a small circle.

"Seb, this is Mag- I mean Aurora. *Damn it.*" Lucy shook her head. "I'm sorry."

"Charmed." Aurora nodded her head in Sebastian's direction.

"And Aurora, this is–"

"Sebastian Everett-Bryce. It's a pleasure to finally meet you outside of a ring. Your... *reputation* precedes you, *Aurora*."

Rory pursed her lips and glanced up at him from beneath her brows briefly.

"As does yours, but that kinda goes without saying, doesn't it?"

Lucy, sensing the bit of tension in the Canadian night, chuckled and stepped between them. "*Ok-ay*... Now that that's out of the way, why don't we take a walk around and look at all of the pretty lights huh?"

"Why don't we three go **inside**" Sebastian insisted as he glared into the side of Lucy's skull. "...Where it's **warm**?"

Lucy turned and gave Seb a look, but before she could say anything Aurora spoke up.

"I don't mind looking around a bit," She said with a bit of a shrug. "It's been a while since I've seen anything even remotely close to this."

"I know, right? It's so *festive*. I have to say, I wasn't really getting into the whole Christmas spirit quite yet. But this is actually kind of nice."

Seb sighed. "I *suppose* it's worth a look."

The three of them moved onward to the trail that led back to the sequential light displays. From a distance, they were just one group among several in a strung out crowd, walking the side of a road where cars could also drive by at a meandering pace and witness the same festival, albeit from a distance. And while they were observing from the warmth and comfort of leather-clad interiors and heated seats - they couldn't stop, couldn't take in the full detail of what they were peering at from behind the frosty glass.

But for our gaggle of frigid fighters, they were in the thick of it. The crunching of packed snow could be heard with each of their footfalls as Lucy led the way, trying her best to point out as many details as she could - hoping one or all of them would fascinate or impress her partners.. Or distract them from the cold.

Either or. She wasn't picky at this point.

"Hey! Look at that, Rory!" Lucy said with a smile and an exaggerated pointing motion towards the next section down the street. "Christmas in the desert. Kinda reminds me of Arizona Bay, yeah?"

Aurora, hands tucked firmly in her pockets, peered up briefly at the green lights strung up as pseudo-cacti and the gunslinger wearing a floppy red santa hat overtop his ten-gallon brim.

"Yeah, *right*." She replied, averting her gaze from the scene and continuing down the street as quickly as her attention had been drawn to it.

Lucy stood and watched her walk off, noticing a slight droop in her shoulders as she walked. Sebastian, who had been lagging not too far behind, caught up to Lucy and stood beside her, eyeing up the Christmastime in the Desert display.

"What I wouldn't give for a little desert heat right about now." Spoke Seb, his voice shaking nearly as much as the rest of him was.

As he and Lucy continued staring at the exhibit, however, they watched as a happy young couple asked another bystander to take a photo of them in front of the display and as they did so, the young lady - a blonde it just so happened - planted a soft kiss on her guy's cheek. Lucy peeked at Seb out of the corner of her eye just in time to see him sigh and shake his head before he turned away as well and trudged off in the direction the Aurora had gone.

It was Lucy's turn to sigh.

"God damnit."

All we want is a better life.

For ourselves. For our family. For our friends and neighbors. And in the XWF, there's an interesting trend on how some people have gone about doing that...

You say you want a revolution?

Well, that's funny. I hear that word tossed around quite a bit around here. The Xtreme hot potato; hell, there's even a championship named after it.

Funny because, history tells us that it's typically not the slaves that revolt. No, you want a revolution, you take the Proletariat... the middle class... and you slowly diminish the coziness

from their lives until the line between the workers and those that truly struggle gets muddled and gray. You know, actually I'm all for the hard work being rewarded. I support unionizing as a means to combat that diminishing return for the people who put in the time and the sweat. I'm all for protecting ourselves against our capitalist fat cat overlords who care more about lining their own hefty pockets and not taking care of the society that filled them in the first place.

But this isn't about that, isn't it, Flynn?

You say you want a revolution. Hell, so does Bacchus, the VLI, half the damn roster, and all things fair and equal, even Matthias Syn. But that's not the whole story. That's not the whole truth. You say you want a revolution but I don't really understand. You, Flynn, have been the Anarchy champion since August. A face of the company... 15th on the Top 50 superstars list (and climbing towards that asshat Bourbon) and, oh yeah, topped the ELO charts for 25 months straight. And "You" just "defended" your championship, "allegedly", against yourself with a little help from "Graves" smattering of goons.

Doesn't sound like you've been struggling to me, my friend.

So what's your deal with this... union?

Do you really want a better life? A better set of workplace rules so that the other superstars are protected? Flynn, if you took off your boots and left them in the middle of the ring today, your list of achievements would still be a benchmark that very few superstars could ever think of aspiring to. When we look at you, I don't see the slave longing for revolt, nor do I see the middle class man breaking his back not to become one. I see the superstar standing outside the door of the boardroom, hoping to wait long enough for some unsuspecting staff member to open the door for him so that he can stick a toe over the threshold.

I doubt very highly that you give a shit about the locker room. Because when I hear the word revolution escaping half of the roster's mouth, there's a common theme among them: no one really *wants* the revolution as much as they *want* to **lead** the revolution.

It's the ultimate power grab for the guy who already has, well, everything.

Ironic.

So don't bullshit us with your fucking Marxist wet-dream manifesto. This isn't about instant replay… which nobody asked for by the way. This isn't about fairness. This is about Mark Flynn throwing his weight around and comparing himself to the likes of Bashmaster, Pryce, and Vinnie Lane out of sheer boredom. I've got news for you: Theodore Pryce did more for… ahem… ***us*** in his resignation letter than *you* ever will. This isn't a revolution as much as it's a Cult Leader passing out cups of kool aid trying to create even more distance between himself and the little guy. Don't bullshit us, Flynn. The only time you're trying to "make a difference" is if that *difference comes with a leather strap and fits snug around your waist.*

This isn't about us. This is about you.

You don't want a better life for ~~your NPCs~~ Graves' students. You're quite frankly out of people to fuck around with, and guess what? I don't blame you one bit. But maybe the winds of change can pick up a bit and shake things up after all. You say you want a revolution, Jimmy fuckin' *wannabe* Hoffa, but I'll do you one better. How about instead of revolution we try a little evolution instead? How about instead of forcing change upon others, we try to embody that change ourselves?

And yeah, maybe that doesn't mean much coming from a girl like me. But you give it time: maybe I'll have to ask Bashmaster to kindly open up the doors for me on Thursday nights. Maybe I'll start paying those Anarchy dues, whipping some poor people's asses until, before we know it, there's a new challenger to the Anarchy throne. Good news Mark, maybe your revolution is coming after all, but there's always a catch.

It seems as if it doesn't really want, need, or care for you that much after all.

And if it's for the kid? Fuck it. Save up for his college fund. Put him in a trade school. Tell the boy that if he's smart he won't end up like his old man making the same mistakes that you did. Enlist him in the army or get him an internship at a local YMCA. Trying to change the rules of the cruelest show on Earth won't change the fact that you were, and still are, one of the dirtiest players in the game.

If you really want to save the kid, steer him clear away from this trainwreck.

Or else he might end up just like… you, anyway.

Once Sebastian had any semblance of separation from, well, anyone - he ducked into the first warm, open doorway he could find. A small cafe, as it turned out, one with a roaring fireplace that began to thaw his frozen digits the moment he stepped through the threshold.

The place was crowded, but for him it didn't matter. He navigated through the crowd, gradually making it to the front of the store where he ordered himself a tea - and when he received it moments later, he scanned the floor, hoping to find an inconspicuous place to sit for a while and build up the courage to go back outside and.. Do whatever it was that would get him back to his hotel room and sweet, sweet alcohol assisted sleep that much quicker.

Seeing that couple outside didn't help.

But it wasn't anything he hadn't seen many times over the last year, except over the last few months, it's gotten more and more difficult to not place his face on the man's face and *her* face on the ladies... A never-ending cycle, an ongoing reminder of what he'd lost. For Sebastian, there truly wasn't very much to be grateful for this year.

His eyes stopped scanning the room when they'd settled on a head full of familiar silver hair.

And beneath that hair was the brain of a woman doing just about as much thinking as Sebastian was. Aurora had come out here early for the sake of 'team building', but after the week she'd had, she truly didn't feel much like 'building' anything. It was funny the way things worked.

Aurora had come to XWF to let it end her before she ruined anything else - But things had gone so much differently than she'd imagined they would. She'd finally felt like she was slowly figuring out who she was again, finally feeling like things didn't have to be so bleak all the time. Amber taking Paper Street hurt, but talking with Matthias helped.

It got her here to Toronto, after all.

But Lucy, bless her soul, had no idea what was going on and when she saw that holiday desert design... it brought back the emptiness she'd been feeling since Amber took the last of the things out of the shop, leaving her with an empty shell of a building and many feelings she didn't want to have, let alone sort through... again.

“Do you mind?”

Aurora glanced up at the voice, to see Sebastian motioning towards the chair across from her.

“Not at all.” She replied, nodding her head as he sat down. “I assume Canada is a free country too.”

The two of them sat for a few moments like that where Seb physically huddled over his hot coop of tea. It was as if he were actively trying to absorb and not waste the tiniest amounts of radiant heat the steam could provide. Glancing over, he noticed that Aurora was not only *not* following his lead, but she appeared to be sipping on a martini so cold that there was literal frost forming on the outside of the glass.

“That doesn’t… bother you?”

“What?” she asked with a questioning glare. Seb nodded toward the drink in her hand. “Oh, this? I mean, It is a tad dry. Can’t tell if it needs more olives or less, but it gets the job done-”

“No, how could you be drinking that swill at a time like this?”

“It’s easy, I guess I just, open my mouth, pour it in, and swallow-”

“No,” Seb huffed, “I meant the temperature-”

“Now that you mention it, It *does* feel a bit warm in here. Maybe I should take this outside.”

“*Out there?* Are you *insane*?”

“That-” She says while taking another sip, “Is an opinion that I am not qualified to offer at this time.”

“Riiiight.” Seb replied with a sigh. “Excuse me.”

And with that it was right back to the fireplace. Sebastian could feel his lips quivering as he tried to take in more tea. This trip was a disaster of the highest order and all it did was remind him of who *wasn’t* here. Being surrounded by townsfolk enjoying the festivities and meeting the

tag-partner of his tag-partner inevitably reminded him of Oliver. It was hard to believe he had been gone for ten years already. Then there was Kinsey whom he lost in June. She would have loved to see the fancy light displays regardless of how cold it was outside.

Ralf would have told him what a whiny little bitch he was being right now in that thick Scottish accent, and for a brief moment it made him smile until the pangs of loss and guilt overtook whatever fleeting cheer there was. If Ralf were still here, then perhaps things feel a lot different… be… a lot different. Same could be said for Kins and Oliver and…

"You get any closer and *you're* going to catch fire."

Aurora's voice startled him so much that he damn near dropped his tea.

"I suppose it would feel better than the alternative."

Rory settled in beside him.

"I thought London was chilly and damp most of the year anyway."

"Regardless of what you Americans think, Not every person in the United Kingdom owns a flat in London."

"Fair point. So where are you from, exactly?"

"…London." Seb replied with a side-eyed glance that could burn holes through most. "Well you don't seem to be bothered *too much*, and here I thought you lived in a desert."

"I do. But here's the thing: it does get really cold at night out there."

"Not this bloody cold."

"No, not *this* cold," she said while motioning toward the tundra just outside the nearby window, "But when it's 105 during the day and damn near freezing just after sunset, you *do* feel it."

Aurora stared off into the dancing flocks in front of them.

"It's not the chill that bothers you. It's the *change*."

"I'm sorry, I can't tell if you're trying to be poignant or not. Are you perhaps referring to something else?"

Rory shrugs. "Maybe. But hey, if it'll clear the air between us, I don't really have any interest in taking Lucy, or the thing you've got going with her away from you. Or your belt. I seriously didn't mean to come off like a threat. I didn't even consider tagging with Lucy a possibility when I first joined-"

"You think *that*'s what's bothering me?"

Aurora pursed her lips.

"No, but what do I know?" She finished the rest of her martini in one huge gulp. "Every time I try to find happiness it seems like someone or something always takes it away. And after a while, I realized it was my fault the entire time."

"So why even bother?"

"Exactly."

The future of professional wrestling:

Can it be changed?

Is it worth it to be changed?

Flynn's building an army, I see. And who does he dredge up from the depths but Schism?

Hey there, buddy, nice to meet you. I hope you brought Marfy along with you. (It is the Mudman's time of year after all.)

But instead, no, I'm sure it'll be Harambe or Ishmael or whatever we're calling a Literal Gorilla these days. I can only hope that Randy is still alive to witness you continuing

your noble quest to save the world. Everyone loves a hero, even the ones that were flushed out of the sewers beneath the Bastille. I'm sure you'll fit right in with the likes of the Bearded Boo Boo Kitty Fuck and Peter "The Fainting GOAT" Parkour. (So sorry to hear about your brother, by the way. RIP in peace, Sean. You *will* be missed, but not during rush hour, ba-dum-tss!) "Micheal Graves" was sorely missing that last peon needed to complete the Proletariat Putty Patrol set and you're just as good as any other warm body with a pulse.

So I guess Ginger Snaps wasn't available, huh?

You want to make *this place* better, too? Well, you know just as much as I do that the wrestling industry is dangerous. It might not be the deadliest catch, but if you're going to make a living doing this, you're going to get hurt.

It's written on the brochure.

Before and after that bell rings, the vets of the industry walk around like extras on the Walking Dead. There's more arthritis and hip replacements in the XWF Hall of Fame than a typical nursing home. The price of glory is pain. The price of climbing the mountain is suffering. You don't make a living climbing a ladder, stepping on the rungs of other people's dreams not expecting the inevitable downfall when the ladder itself is trying to drop you.

You might be a little more batshit than the floors of the cave under Wayne manor, but you do still understand what you're signing up for. This isn't something as simple as *lumbering* into the Main Event pushing your shit poetry about barnyard animals and bitcoin scandals and the ghosts who haunt the dusty frames of whatever fucking AirBnB you've squatted in. This isn't a joke, Schism. While this may be amusing to you, you should have mounted your own dusty frame and kept your ass where you belong.

You're not the humane man of the universe that you once thought to be.

You're just a passenger who checked himself in from the bleachers.

You had no skin in this game.

But now you're playing, and you know just like the rest of us that you'll have to *pay* to win.

Lucy sat on a bench on the side of the road and sighed as she looked out among the park. It was late now, even for this place, and the lines of people walking past had diminished down to barely a trickle. There was no child's laughter to overhear; no young couples chit-chatting about how much effort went into the Festival this year.

It was a failure. Sebastian went in one direction, Aurora went in another. Instead of the three of them bonding as a team and sharing the moment as one, all it did was remind her how alone she really was.

"What are you still doing out here? I've been looking all over for you."

Huh? She shot her eyes back toward the direction of the voice. It was Seb. He was standing there, freezing his ass off, sure. But he *did* come back.

"I thought you left-"

"No," he replied, shaking his head. "I couldn't leave without my BFF."

"Aww, Seb! I–"

"It turns out that you still have the only set of keys to the rental in your pocket."

"You fucker," Lucy sighed. "So, did you just come back to get the keys or were you gonna remind me of what a failure this evening has been, since–"

Seb rolled his eyes and reached out a hand for Lucy to take. "Come on. The longer we sit out here the less time that we could be drowning our sorrows inside a warm pub."

Lucy took his hand. They made their way back to the car.

Wylde no sooner had the engine running before the Universal Champion had the heaters on full blast. He was quivering and cussing out the automobile for somehow spitting out colder air than what was outside.

"Could you be patient for just one damn moment?"

"Did you say that to Jack at the end of Titanic when Rose wouldn't let him up on the door?"

"Fine, whatever," Lucy replied as she pulled the shifter into gear. "Sorry that I wasted everyone's evening."

"Hey, hey, hold on a moment," Seb put his hand across to stop her. "What are you trying to do, *run her over*?"

"What the hell are you talking ab–?"

The rear door of the car opened up and in popped Aurora, plopping herself near the center of the seat.

"Sorry-"

"I thought you left!"

"No, no..." Rory smiled. "What did you tell her? That I went off skinny dipping or something?"

"I didn't tell Lucy anything... did I, BFF?"

Lucy shrugged her shoulders. "...No? But what's going on here?"

"Nothing. I had to settle out a little tab that we had rung up..."

"With *my* money."

"Something tells me you won't miss it."

"I should have let you pay like you offered."

"Maybe. But *oooh*, can we drive down past the lights while we're leaving? I'd really like to see the rest of them if we can."

Lucy glanced back into the rearview mirror and then to her side and let out a sigh.

"Oh, so ya'll just need a chauffeur. *Nice*." She continued putting the car into gear and began driving towards the lights. "Glad you guys enjoyed yourselves.."

"Enjoyed? Nah, we're just getting ***started***."

"The night is still young."

Aurora nodded in agreement as she reached out and patted the top of Lucy's seat. "But hey, you're the reason that we're here, and we both want to spend time with you."

"A proper, festive time. The two BFFs, and some trollop with gray hair."

"I'm her tag team partner, you know!"

"I was her tag team partner first!"

"Nuh-uh!"

"Well, we've been champions longer."

"Oh well excuse me, Mister London," Aurora rolled her eyes. "But XWF has more than *two* **real** tag teams that aren't some rando plus Zane Scott."

"...*Ooof*."

Lucy shook her head. "While it's fantastic to see you two getting along... it doesn't change the fact that you both left me out in the cold by myself."

Silence settled in the car for a few moments, that was, until Aurora chuckled.

"...Wouldn't be that much of a problem if you didn't have all those holes in your clothes."

"I know, *right*?" Seb agreed, the two of them high-fiving in the dark.

"I hate you both so much right now, I can't even."

"*Merry Christmas, Lucy.*" Aurora said sweetly.

"Shut the fuck up, Mags."

Seb cleared his throat and leaned towards Lucy. "*Merry Christmas to you, my dear BFF.*"

"You can shut the fuck up too, Sebastian. But thank you both.. And for the record, you're **both** buying my drinks."

"I'll buy 6.9 percent of your drinks..."

"God damnit!"

You know how this all started? Twitter. With Bobby Bourbon doing what he does best - popping up in my mentions to remind everyone of that time he and his heterosexual life partner (gimmick infringement) came out of a match with Pantheon with the win. I get it, beating Corey Black is big. Beating Corey and Seb? That's fucking huge. I guess a win like that would be the perfect thing to catapult a team back to superstardom, right? Right? RIGHT?

Where's that Padme meme when you need it.

Though I have to admit, I'm misleading you all just a little. This time it wasn't specifically a focus on Pantheon but on me directly. You know, because we both lost at Wargames which means we're basically the same. Except, that's not what it means at all. I understand that people love to see me fail - it happens so rarely that it's like a bonus Christmas when they get to live through such an earth-shattering event. So, when other people fail at the same time as me, it makes them feel a little better. Because it can't be so bad... Seb did it too. I'm just glad I can be here to keep your fragile egos topped up.

But we're not the same.

See, Bobert is an undeniable legend in this company. He is without doubt the haunting spectre that finds your biggest weaknesses and knows exactly how much pressure to apply. He is unlike anyone else at knowing exactly how to get under your skin... save for maybe Johnny fucking Bacchus. And that legend that he's shrouded in? It's been cultivated over years and years of hard work, and setbacks. Through on again off again relationships with TK and attempts to stand out on his own. But see, that's where he and I differ. Because I'm already a legend in XWF and

I made it here in less than one year. Because I don't need to find my opponent's weakness to exploit.

I am their weakness.

Don't believe me, Double B? Go ask Flynn. He knows what it's like to think he's got my number, and walk out the other side with nothing in his hands but his dick. You and me, Bobby? I know we'll go on beyond this Six man. I know you won't rest until you and I stand opposite one another with no one else in the way. This obsession you have with me is unhealthy, but I'm happy to indulge you for a little while. Because I know you're just hanging on for dear life to this idea that you're some kind of guardian of the halls of XWF. As if being here as long as you have gives you the right to think this is your company to protect. But the truth is? It's mine.

And it has been since the day I walked through those doors.

And no manner of setback will change that. Right Mark? Afterall, you're still one of only two people to actually beat me one on one since I arrived here almost a year ago. Granted, Ned could only do it after you softened me up and the less said about how our first match ended the better, am I right? Which is why, I suppose, I find you in my business all over again. Because Mark Flynn can't quite shake the idea that there's a question mark over what was arguably the biggest victory of his long career so far.

Not my words buddy. Just, everyone else's.

And that's why you so desperately wanted to be the one that managed to take the Universal Title off me. You came close - and not just in the Triple Threat. I still owe Sean Parker an ethereal beer for halting your cash on the night that Big Bobby and Moose Knuckle beat the shit out of me. Funny isn't it? How so often you and the Bastards seem to align... They almost helped you cash in on me, and now you and Bobby B are bosom buddies seeking to unite and rid the Universe of the plight that is the SEB Empire. It's almost poetic when you think about it.

They'll write songs about us one day.

But for now, they'll just ask their questions. Like, what happens to Mark Flynn when the old guard fails to protect it from the new? What happens to Mark Flynn when he realises his victory back in February was just another case of a broken clock being right twice a day? What happens to Mark Flynn when he can't make this world a better place for his own child because he's neither strong enough nor determined enough to make it happen?

What happens when he lets everyone down again?

There's no doubt you're a talent Mark - I've made that clear every time we've faced one another. And Christ, if you think I don't know what Bobby Bourbon can do in that ring after I was damn near scraped up off it after your attempted cash-in then you're every bit as moronic as you are talented. But knowing how good you are doesn't change the fact that I know that I'm better. Knowing how dominant

Bobby can be doesn't change the fact that I know how to dominate in that ring. Knowing how strong a trio the three of you will be doesn't change the fact that the team you face owns two sets of Tag Team Championships across two separate companies.

Knowing all that just means we'll be ready for you.

All of you.

And you should be pretty damn worried about that fact.