

## RP: Hotline Bling



By [Negaduck](#) 680 days ago [Comments \(61\)](#)

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*Ever since I left the city, you, you, you  
You and me we just don't get along  
You make me feel like I did you wrong  
Going places where you don't belong*

...

The silvery tones of a Drake of the non-feathered variety fluttered out of the guard house at Malicia Macawber's HQ. It was oddly quiet. A new shipment of stock had arrived that night and most of the boys were there to assure the delivery went smoothly. Not that law enforcement was in the habit of interrupting them any longer.

Fortunately with the docks being around the corner, only two goons were left securing the warehouse proper. It wasn't as if they were expecting trouble.

Which, of course, is always when trouble hits.

"Boss!" One of her right hand goons, Tony, burst into the foreyard. Barely able to stand, he practically fell on the intercom. "Boss, you gotta get out here... There's been a, uh, complication..."

[[RP: This blog reserved for Malicia, Negaduck and Scarlet for now but contact me if you want in. Follows a scene with Lilly yet to be played out, but as is clear, bad boys are back in town.]]



[Malicia Macawber](#) 680 days ago

Her Highness the Royal Queen Malicia was leaning back on her throne (read: beach lounge chair) flipping through a magazine. Slowly, her eyes followed the sound and its source with an unimpressed glower.

"So *deal* with it. That's what I pay you idiots for, isn't it?" She snapped. Honestly, this is what I get for buying the discount minion package...

"Is it those idiots at SHUSH again?"



[Negaduck](#) 680 days ago

But the source was irritatingly persistent.

"You don't understand! We're going to lose the squad AND the shipment!"

If she were in grabby range - and not a quick tempered demon prone to melting faces - he would have tugged her along by the hand. Claw.

"You need to see this!"

Because I'm more scared of it than I am of disrupting your Me Time. Only just.



[Malicia Macawber 680 days ago](#)

*Ugh.* FINE. Guess I'll do work.

Removing herself ever-so-slowly from her seat, she followed along behind him at what could only be described as the most unenthusiastic pace -- like a parent trailing behind their overstimulated offspring.

"This better be worthwhile, otherwise I'm switching you to doggy-doo-doo clean-up for the next month!"

Given the size of the aforementioned 'doggy', this threat carried great weight to it. Literally and metaphorically.



[Negaduck 680 days ago](#)

Tony hurried along, loading his pistol, although he knew the fat lot of good that would do him.

Arriving at the scene, it was apparent a small war was going on. And they were losing.

Along the jetty, the bodies of lost minions were scattered. All had come to meet their end through a variety of creative fashions. Skewered by giant echidnas, scorched by laser refined dragon's breath, literally frozen in icy fear.

Whoever had taken control of the ship and taken control of the weapons on board too.

What was particularly disconcerting, however, was on the torso of each fallen fighter, was etched a symbol. In a row, it read:

'bRINg WE YOUR LEADER'

Her head henchman flailed. "We can't work it out. What does it MEAN?"

Double rainbow of death - so intense!



[Malicia Macawber](#) 680 days ago

Well... this was certainly interesting. Not too many magic users in these parts, other than Morgana... and she was too soft for this level of violence. A newcomer, perhaps?

"Stay here." She carefully stepped over the bodies, almost as though she were trying to pay some respect by not treading on the remains of her fallen minions. Really though, she wanted to avoid blood-stains on her brand new heels.

Head held high, and chest perked out, she headed straight to the center of the chaos.



[Negaduck](#) 680 days ago

The gangway cooperatively lowered to allow her entry. How thoughtful.

Onboard the ship evidence of the battle was all around but obscured by thick noxious smoke that was bleeding from a leak in the engine room below.

Really, someone had a taste for the dramatic.

With very click of those dangerous heels on steel, the cameras mounted across the deck trailed after her.

Someone also liked all the cards to be in their hands.



[Malicia Macawber](#) 680 days ago

She let out an annoyed sigh and paused in her trek to file a snag in one of her claws. Those darn things *always* seemed to chip, it was so awfully inconvenient. And all this smoke was going to wreak havoc on her hair! She stopped to gaze at her reflection in the metallic surface of the inner hull, and took some time to adjust a few stray strands of hair.

Long since she had swapped out her green dress for a more luxurious black gown, with (real) gold trim that matched quite nicely with the jewelry adorning her claws and around her neck. No point in having all this bling if you're not gonna show it off, after all.

It was evident that someone had laid out a path for her, and so she followed it. Seemingly unperturbed by any potential traps or surprises that lay ahead.

Because for some strange reason she was awfully accustomed to the overdramatic.



[Negaduck](#) 680 days ago

The trail lead winding ever downwards into the bowels of the vessel. Bulletholes marked the walls, deep pools of crimson leaked across the floor, and swarms of poison shooting lizards escaped from damaged crates darted through passageways.

Eventually Malicia would make it to what appeared to be the lowest level. The main loading bay. There the smoke would part like in a dream to reveal, leaning against the loading controls, the biggest nuisance of all. One she thought she had gotten rid of long ago.

VD.

Or at least, the walking red-hatted embodiment of all things filthy and diseased.

"Well." Negaduck's gaze swept with his lazy lecherousness up and down her form. "Been busy?"

As if he had gone for a brief business trip rather than a spectacular demise.



[Malicia Macawber](#) *680 days ago*

She stopped in her tracks a few feet from him.

It was Negaduck. No immediate doubts about potential robots or holograms or other-dimensional clones. This was *him*. She knew that smell, that voice, that unmistakable presence that stood out so fiercely, never failing to obscure everything around him.

It was Negaduck. And after five long years of death, he was alive.

She shifted her weight to one side.

"A busy business is a successful business. And yourself?"



[Negaduck](#) *680 days ago*

Nothing unfamiliar. In all that time, he had not changed. The mask did not help; it always obscured his age, and to a lesser extent, his injuries.

But never his thoughts. Which, as he took in the new look of his long ago long time counterpart, where as transparent as a pane of glass.

"Oh I've been having a *blast*."

No bitterness eating into that word play, only a tar black sense of humour.

He placed the rocket propelled puppy launcher he had been idly brushing to one side. That would be fun to play with later. There were far bigger toys to play with now.

"All this time I've been gone, and that's all you have to give me? Idle chitchat?"

More than happy to show you what you ought to be giving instead.



[Malicia Macawber](#) *680 days ago*

"Oh, I'm terribly sorry, were you expecting a tearful reunion?" She snapped, stepping toward him now. He was enough to touch, to kiss even.

"I should've known you'd finagle a way out of death. That's what you do, isn't it? You start trouble, but you always come away winning in the end. Though I do wonder..." She leaned in close, her lips almost ready to brush against his.

*Slap!* Followed by the sound of her hand striking his face, like the crack of a bullwhip.

"...why it took you so long to get back here! Alive! After all this time! **FIVE YEARS**, and only NOW, you decide to show your idiotic face?! And it's just so you can hijack MY wares and dispose of MY men after you carve notes on them? You've got some nerve!"



[Negaduck 680 days ago](#)

Those nerves were set alight, nearly slapped off his face. Just like the suaveness.

"Right, I wrangle my way out of a deadly explosion, THROUGH oblivion, THROUGH countless dimensions, and I'M the bad guy?!"

Pause.

"You know what I mean!"

Anger explosion brought back under control like a pitbull on a frayed leash.

"Besides, you haven't done too poorly. The government in your back pocket. Police looking the other way. Sounds all so.. placid. I thought you could do with a little excitement."

Depending how malleable she was to his touch, he might have the audacity to pull her onto his lap, control bench creaking beneath her weight. A-hem. Their weight.

"You've missed that, haven't you?"

That. Not me. That.



[Malicia Macawber 680 days ago](#)

A thoughtful pause. Oblivion? Dimension hopping?

"Were you... never dead?" That would certainly explain the struggle with harnessing his soul -- though she assumed that was due to his natural stubborn nature, and not because it was still tethered to a living shell.

"They never did find your body, I suppose..." She mused aloud. "But after the first year of your absence, when the city saw a massive surge in the girl scouting and puppy population, I accepted you were gone for good."

That was an exceptionally cute and cuddly year... *shudder*.

"So... now you just waltz back in here and what? You think you can *take* my wares from me again? Didn't you learn your lesson the first time around?"



[Negaduck](#) *680 days ago*

"Honey..." That smile was as silky rotten as the fingertip tracing knowingly over her curves. "I just wanted to make sure we were on good terms still is all."

Look at that, they were beside his next favourite toy. A big red button. Unnervingly labelled BAY DOOR OPEN.

"Because if not, I'll hit this and you and I and all these precious wares can pay a lovely visit to the bottom of Audubon Bay."

He would do it too, of course, because there was no spite quite like Negaspite (tm).

Yet the tilt of the head was so playful, because he knew he didn't need to hold thousands of containers hostage to get the desired answer.

"Which button would you rather I press?"

Stop teasing already. We have so much time to catch up on.



[Malicia Macawber](#) *680 days ago*

"You are such a spoiled bastard, you know that?" She hissed vehemently, but her body was leaning into his touch. It had been so, so agonizingly long since she'd felt it. Felt *anything*, really.

"But I suppose I still need to give you your birthday present..."

No peeking!



[Negaduck](#) *680 days ago*

"Oh?" Cheeky bastard he was too, knowing exactly where they were headed. "And what is that?"

Self control sliding out of his hands in three.. two.. one...



[Malicia Macawber](#) *680 days ago*

Outside the ship, the remaining group of men were pacing down the dock, clutching their firearms.

"The boss has been in there awhile, you think we should go in after 'er?"

"What? Are you **crazy**? And end up like one of these suckers?" He kicked a nearby torso for emphasis. "Nah man, she's got this."

As if on cue, the gangway lowered again. Rifles were immediately loaded and ready, then slowly lowered as the familiar curvaceous figure reappeared alongside a second silhouette. Both seemingly in a hurry as they stepped off the ship.

"Is that..."

"Naaaaw... couldn't be."

"Not even a chance! He's dead!"

"It's gotta be some sorta hired actor."

The confused and curious murmuring was completely ignored, in favor of a direct path to the warehouse. Mal had bigger things on her mind, and they involved tending to her personal favourite smoking gun. As the front gates to the reinforced and largely-renovated warehouse were opened, the re-appearance of Mal's yellow, red, and black-clad partner caused a ripple effect among the minions.

THE KING HAS RETURNED.



[Negaduck](#) *680 days ago*

Yet as they hurried, something kept pulling him back.

His own cape appeared to be strangling him.

Whenever Malicia was not looking, the blackness of the fabric seemed to leach into the air, twisting around like strands of smog.

And now whatever made up that smog was less than happy.

"Hey-- would you-- QUIT it!" He hung back to whisper yell at it. "If I'm going to get what we're after, I have to get at HER, remember?! This was part of the plan!"

That seemed to placate the surly accessory, and he was back on Malicia's tail. Figuratively. For the moment..

Held up only as they entered the warehouse and he turned to her gang. No words, only the cocky sort of seeya wave that read: JELLY, BOYS?

And a SLAM of the doors behind them that read: TOO BAD. HAH.

Making friends, as always.



[Piper/ Jade](#) *679 days ago*

*Two weeks later...*

Word had reached Jade's ears about... Well... The return of Negaduck.

It had started as a rumor that she'd overheard from a distance. Initially she ignored it... Over the past few years there had been multiple such rumors, all quickly snuffed out and revealed to be false. She easily shrugged this one off and went about her business. It was not as if she did not have her hands full working as a triple agent. Or was it quadruple now?

However, this rumor was not leaving, and Malicia's managerial absence was a... Concerning sign. Normally the demoness was in touch once a week either to feed her information to pass on to FOWL or ask her to do a job. Two weeks of silence prompted investigation.

Masked up, she passed through the gate to Malicia's warehouse and made her way towards to guard station. She felt it a safer bet to ask Tony since he usually had a front row seat to all the goings on. Somehow he had gained some sort of enduring favor from his boss, because he was more often than not stationed close to the demonesses personal self. If he confirmed, she'd go to Malicia herself.

"Tony?" She called. They knew who she was by now... Probably better than Jade would have liked. "I need to talk with you please."



[Malicia Macawber](#) *679 days ago*

"Oh.... heeey..." A raspy voice greeted him, alongside baggy, dark-circled eyes. Tony looked exhausted.

In fact, just about everyone lurking the premises looked a bit more... sluggish than usual. Guards were yawning as they leaned against their posts, and one nodded off only to abruptly snap awake again.

"Talk? Yeah sure. What about? I don't think the Boss has any jobs for you."



[Piper/ Jade](#) *679 days ago*

"I know..." she said, tilting her head a bit to take in his ragged, tired expression. She had never come to Tony before asking about work— why he assumed she had now was beyond her. Although glancing around... nobody seemed to be with it today.

"I... came to see if the rumors were true. That Negaduck was back." She waved her hand slightly. "We've heard that a million times before... and it was all a lie. Or an imposter. Since you are so trusted..." ah yes, butter him up, "I figured you would know first hand. I don't want to spring a question like that on Malicia if I can help it... I've seen what she does when the topic is brought up."

Getting barbecued did not sound like an effective use of her evening.





[Malicia Macawber](#) 679 days ago

His blood-shot eyes widened, and he looked off to the side with a thousand-yard stare.

"It's true." He rasped. "All of it. The legends about those two... the noise, the earthquakes. All of it's true. It only goes silent for an hour and then it *happens* again." His full paranoia becoming apparent as he glanced around and twitched.

"Everyday we have guys defecting. They say they can't take it anymore. That say they didn't sign up for this, and no dental plan is worth it. We're down a third of our staff, so the rest of us have to work extra hard, and we can't nap anymore... not for long anyway before it *happens* again."



○

[Piper/ Jade](#) 679 days ago

The sinking feeling in her gut was making her nauseous... but she forced a straight face. Tony wouldn't lie about something like this, nor would he ever be able to convince all of Malicia's goons to get in on the joke.

"Alright." She said, offering him a gentle, reassuring pat on the shoulder. "Hang in there... it can only last so long, right?" Jade took a step back and turned for the house. She needed to confirm it herself, but at least she knew what she was walking into.

Last she had seen Negaduck she'd been completely jacked up on anger-fueled adrenalin. Now... she was going to have to figure out what to do... if he was back, the city was in trouble again. Even if she'd taken a stance with the criminal element, it did not mean she wanted to see people get hurt.

And with Negaduck that was pretty much a guarantee.

Cautiously and silently, she pushed the door for the warehouse open and entered.



○

[Negaduck](#) 679 days ago

Inside was a demolition zone. Furniture, walls and even some of Malicia's prized self portraits lay stricken around in rubble.

From behind a upturned marble bench that seemed to be indented with great big butt prints came voices.

"Mmm." Negaduck was stretched out and refuelling, which of course meant overdosing on his other vices, cigars and hard liquor. "I think we're running out of things to break."

Arm around his cohort to pull her in, revelling in the conspiracy. "Let's take it to the warehouse. Perhaps I can get my hands on your wares there too, eh?"

Because that would be a good mix and would not result in half of St Canard being levelled.



○

[Malicia Macawber](#) 679 days ago

"I think you'll enjoy some of the renovations I've done in there." She purred lowly, brushing her finger against the tip of cigar in his mouth, lighting it up.

"You'll find it well-stocked, seeing as it hasn't been ransacked since, well, *you*." Really, he was the only one with the gusto to even try, or succeed.



[Negaduck](#) 679 days ago

"Not surprised. Nobody else has my *talent*." Wanton gaze settled on her. Black dress be damned. This look suited her so much more. "So." He began. "Achieved a lot in my absence, did you?" Skating onto thin ice. And ice and fire together...



[Malicia Macawber](#) 679 days ago

"Not to *brag* or anything..." Yeahright. "But I own this city. The politicians, the police force.... all in my pocket. With the exception of SHUSH, I have just about everything under my control. Darkwing Duck is nothing but a joke, desperately trying to remain relevant in a city that has no need for him."

She leaned into him and murmured in a lower voice. "But I admit it's been..... *underwhelming* for some time now."



[Piper/ Jade](#) 679 days ago

Jade paused and ducked against a broken statue, hoping to remain out of sight so she could listen in.

Her eyes focused in the general direction of the voices... she recognized them both, and there was no mistaking it. One was Malicia's. The other, Negaduck's.

She craned her neck to try and *see* the duo... but she had pretty much already concluded she had the evidence she needed.

Her mind was racing... who would she go to? S.H.U.S.H? Jade knew at least there she'd receive some form of protection... but F.O.W.L. had the firepower and tenacity to all-out attack. They would at least prove to be a worthy opponent for the two...

Because from where she was... it sounded as if they were aligning once more. Resting her head against the stone for a second, she thought on it...

It would have to be S.H.U.S.H. For Lydia's sake.



[Negaduck](#) 679 days ago

A darkness came across him that could be mistaken for a reaction to his double's name. After all, Dipweed had not only set his plans back half a decade but also made to deliberately, ruthlessly, end him.

Surely the vigilante deserved the full force of his retribution.

Malicia's closeness, however, snapped him out of his brooding.

"And to think, you were so caught up in that nonsense about 'souls'."

Wiggle of his fingers to show what he thought of that. Magic. Pah.

"Bet you have no need of that hocus pocus balarney now, huh? What with everything so.. tightly under your control."

Casual chatter. No fishing allowed here.



○

[Malicia Macawber](#) 679 days ago

"Oh come now, you know soul collecting is my favourite hobby! I could never give that up!" Not catching on whatsoever. Blame the post-coital hormones on that one.

"I've gained some fantastic specimens. There's this one thousand-year-old troll King..." She chattered on cheerfully, getting lost in the subject. The 'S' word seemed to trigger an innate nerdiness, causing her to prattle endlessly about the theoretical and practical principles of soul reaping.

Surely that wasn't his intention, however. Not like he needed to know about the topic, for any particular reason...

Finally, however her eyes slid over to him, along with her hands. "You still haven't told me how you found your way back here, you know. How did the 'Mighty Negaduck' cheat his way out of death this time?"



○

[Piper/ Jade](#) 679 days ago

She'd seen and heard enough. It was time to go.

Pushing off the statue, Jade started making her way back towards the door. How was she even going to find SHUSH? She knew they had a headquarters but she hadn't paid much attention as to where it was... and it was not as if they were listed in the phone book.

...wait...

Maybe they were? They WERE that kind of ridiculous, after all.

So lost in her thoughts— and lets face it, in this mess who would even glance twice at it, Jade's foot landed directly on a particular cape that was pinned beneath an anvil.

Nothing suspicious about that at all.



[Negaduck 679 days ago](#)

Damnit, turning it back on him before he had a chance to sneak further questions in.

Still, the soul collection was in play. That was useful to know.

Never one to miss an opportunity to talk himself up though, smugness slid back onto Negaduck's face.

"Remember this?"

The BANANA.

Where had he drawn that from?!

"The downside of escaping a fiery death via doom banana into oblivion is obvious. The downside of escaping oblivion via doom banana is, well..."

As he trailed off his very selective story telling, across the war zone, one wet and very cranky cape was getting stomped on. It spiralled viciously around Jade's ankle as if it had something to prove.

It was only fabric though. Fabric which got tangled up with her movement. That's all.



[Piper/ Jade 679 days ago](#)

That simple fabric spelled her demise.

Jade was able to hold back the yelp from her sudden entanglement, but there was no covering the sound of her slamming against ground.

Breath momentarily knocked from her, she struggled to push herself over, and reached to quickly free her legs. Before either villain came to investigate the noise.



[Malicia Macawber 679 days ago](#)

Mal's eyes widened. The *banana*. Of course, it was the banana. Of all things.

"You crazy bastard!" That was a compliment oddly enough. "And then you must've vaulted through hundreds of dimensions..."

Her attention diverted by the interruption of a stranger.

"DAMMIT TONY. You better not be spying, or so help me, doggy duty will be your full time job!"



[Negaduck 679 days ago](#)

A snarl. On guard immediately. Like their first night together, when Darkwing had come crashing through the bathroom to catch them mid-entanglement. The idiot had netted him to the shower. Not for long, of course.

If it were Darkwing interrupting this Malicia binge, there would be bloodshed.

So, by contrast, when he appeared over Jade, the expression he was wearing along with those ridiculous(ly terrifying) skull boxers was more one of pleasant surprise. Like someone had deposited a maggot infested skull in his lap.

"What do we have here?" purred with malicious delight. "A burglar? How *cute*."

This, as anyone who knew the slightest thing about him, was not a compliment.



[Piper/ Jade 679 days ago](#)

Rapid blinking.

*Oh God put on more clothing please.*

*Wait... you need to respond. Quick!* Thank God he did not seem to remember her.

"Just coming to pay my respects." She said, smoothly, pushing that stupid cape further off her legs. "I simply have rotten timing... as my boss can attest to." A nod towards Malicia. Affirming their alignment, and hopefully the demoness would not leave her hanging.

...too much.



[Malicia Macawber 679 days ago](#)

Mal seemed rather surprised at the sudden appearance of the thief, mainly because she didn't stop by unless it was for business. And there hadn't been any recent business... though it was possible she might've had some new tidbits to tell her.

Sidling up next to Negs, her tail coiled around him playfully. "She works for me, evilkins. My little personal thief." She grinned playfully.

Then to Jade, a nod. "I'm certain you already know who this is, don't you?"



[Negaduck 679 days ago](#)

But he wasn't paying any attention to either of the two women and their prattling.

He was studying Jade's masked face rather intently.

Then, violent enough to be a precursor to what would surely follow, it clicked.

"YOU." Funny how Negarage could give him sudden strength enough to not only lift the chainsaw but the entire broken half of the table it was lodged within. "I'm going to CRUSH you into a million tinier than glitter pieces, you wrenched motorcycle-wrecking, piano-dropping NUISANCE!"

Aww. Weren't reunions fun.



[Piper/Jade 679 days ago](#)

Jade let out a curse, (which just sounded odd in that sweet voice of hers) and scrambled to her feet.

Oh... so he *did* remember. Must move. Quickly. Go go go!

She shifted to dive out of the way of said table-and-chainsaw combo... but just as her feet left the ground something yanked her back, causing her to plummet right back down to the floor with the painful aid of gravity.

A panicked glance back... that **cape!** How...?!



[Malicia Macawber 679 days ago](#)

"Ugh. Must you solve everything with decapitation?" Eyeroll. "Just leave her be, she brings me wonderful shiniies."

That, and he probably deserved whatever wrongdoing was done to him.

"Besides..." A playful tug on his boxers. "We haven't finished *catching up* yet."



[Negaduck 679 days ago](#)

Like logic was ever enough to derail him once he turned Nega-Hulk.

"RGH!"

The table brought down mercilessly on his target.

This had the fortunate - unfortunate? - effect of smashing it to bits and freeing the chainsaw.

"WHO'S GOT THE DROP ON WHO NOW?!"

Start pull yanked gleefully. This was going to get nasty. Er. Nastier.

Yet the engine didn't kick into gear. Odd. It appeared to be gummed up. How had that happened?

A growl and he yanked it again. The second time worked, and it revved into life. The precious seconds lost may have made all the difference to Jade's survival chances, but he was in the zone.

Cackling, Negaduck would start with her limbs. Cut her down to size, as it was.

See, he had plenty of tricks as well as decapitation!



[Malicia Macawber](#) 679 days ago

Here came the classic hands around throat technique. Gosh, she'd almost forgotten that grasping maneuver. So warm and strangly...

"NO. BAD NEGS. We do not kill my minions!" Like a dog in need of severe discipline.

To Jade she beckoned at the door. "Now would be a wonderful time for you leave. We'll chit-chat later!"



[Piper/Jade](#) 679 days ago

She only had time to let out a short scream before she was silenced with the table.

Jade was left flattened to the ground for a moment. Dazed... she thought for a moment on how her flippancy had come around full force on her.

Survival kicked in when that chainsaw roared to life... she needed to move... and in a grateful moment... Malicia provided her an out.

Once again pushing herself up, wooden shards clamoring to either side of her, she forced herself to her feet and stumbled drunkidly for the door. Her hand braced her side... something was broken.. a rib she guessed. No time to worry on it now.

*Need to get away...*



[Negaduck](#) 679 days ago

"HURK!"

He writhed. Not a happy kind of writhe. Not the sort that would've been happening if Jade hadn't waltzed on in with her spying and her crushable face.

Clawing at Malicia's claws, rasping out something that could have been 'Put me DOWN, wench!' Because he gave the orders, and they were followed, damnit.

Meanwhile, Jade was getting away with more than a juicy piece of intel.

Wrapped around her boot, the smallest piece of cape had torn itself off and stuck there. A tiny spy on a spy. Depending what she got up to, a broken rib might end up the least of her worries.



[Malicia Macawber](#) *678 days ago*

"Less killing, more sinning!" Dragging him away caveman-style, muttering under her breath a few 'can't-take-you-anywhere-I-swear' lectures.

Congrats, Jade, you get to live another day! What will you do with it?



[Piper/ Jade](#) *675 days ago*

*A mere day later...*

Jade waited... which for her was actually incredibly hard. Especially when she knew that time was going to play a huge role in how everything went down. And, there were kids involved. And she was pretty angry...

She did not want to go back into Malicia's home... but she had to. Toni and Rosa were counting on her. So she did what she needed, and waited for Lilly to text her and let her know that Malicia was there. If things went the way they were supposed to, Jade would have at least a good solid half an hour to look around.

Luckily it was not too long before the phone in her pocket vibrated.

Finally.

Show time.

She slipped around the gate and walked right in. The guards would not stop her, so she had no issue there. It was going to be once she was inside that was tricky.

Jade went around the back way to enter through the warehouse. The main house had been trashed, and the last thing she needed, or wanted, was to dig through rubble. Jade was fairly certain that Malicia would not allow Negaduck to trash her armaments.



[Negaduck](#) *675 days ago*

No sign of any unusual activity in the warehouse. Which was unusual in itself - normally Negaduck would have been right back to his plundering self, taking anything required for his latest scheme.

In the living quarters, as Jade had seen, very little was left unshattered. But things were starting to magically put themselves back in order - tables unsplitting, props walking themselves back to their usual hiding places. A broom carrying two buckets walked past to put out the fire along the rafters.



Again, the most unusual aspect of this was that Negaduck was allowing it to occur.

From the next storey, however, there came noises. The faint sound of his voice and.. someone else?

Maybe he just had other priorities.



[Piper/ Jade 675 days ago](#)

Stepping lightly, Jade made sure not to get in the way of any magical cleaning supplies and repairing furniture. Jade had to be impressed at the efficiency of Malicia's sorcery... clearly it came in handy.

She knew that any sort of information was going to be more towards the center of the warehouse—in Malicia's personal rooms most likely. She would start there and work her way out. Much easier to explain why she was in the main living area or the warehouse than Malicia's quarters.

On her way, she recognized Negaduck's sourly tones. Frowning, she almost turned to leave, but hearing second, unfamiliar voice made her pause.

Who was he talking to?

Female?

Malicia was gone, after all.

Drawn by a cursed curiosity, Jade silently made her way up to the second story, hugging the wall and railing as she went in effort to go unnoticed. Snooping was snooping after all. Maybe she'd overhear something about the kids.



[Negaduck 675 days ago](#)

"-it's not MY fault. I can't rush these things! She'll catch on!"

Through the crack in the door, the woman's calm tones were in stark contrast to his. "The spell won't work without it. And our time-

"What'd do you want me to do? ASK her?!"

"Perhaps a third party would be wiser. One of those.. friends... she was talking about."

No talk of children but plotting? Definitely.



[Piper/ Jade 675 days ago](#)

Jade pressed closer, leaning in to listen closely. Third party? Friend? And who was the 'she'? Malicia? Lilly? Rosa?

She frowned... she needed more facts. Jade also needed to know who he was talking to. Frowning slightly, and shifting, she tried to see through the crack. All she could tell was that it was a female—the voice had already told her as much.

And who would be dumb enough to team up with Negaduck? Didn't they know he had a habit of killing off partners?

- [Negaduck 675 days ago](#)

Unbeknownst to Jade, the little stowaway on her boot slipped through the crack and re-joined the wispy blackness there.

BAAM!

The door had spun on its axis like a revolving version of the same, bringing her abruptly inside.

And face to face with a shocked Negaduck and one tall witch clad in what appeared to be smoke, trailed out in streams to his cape.

"You. Again." Negaduck recovered from the surprise quickly. But not as fast as Jade would need to.



- 

- [Piper/ Jade 675 days ago](#)

She let out a sharp yell and immediately flattened her back to the door as if somehow pushing against it would somehow provide an exit. How had the door done that?!

Eyes wide, she looked between Negaduck and the witch before her. "M...M..." her mouth formed the name but she couldn't seem to vocalize it.

This couldn't be right. No.. this... was wrong... but suddenly a huge light bulb went off. The book. Negaduck's return...

*Oh crud...*

"Oh! Malicia isn't in here, I'll just keep looking!" she reached for the doorknob. Just an innocent mistake, don't mine me!



- 

- [Negaduck 675 days ago](#)

The sorceress's hand still aglow with magic, she gave the faintest flick of her wrist, and the door locked.

Have at it.

Negaduck, meanwhile, was closing in.

"Oh you won't be seeing Malicia any more." His grasp shot out to try to catch Jade by the arm, to twist her painfully down beneath him. "You interfering *pest*."

I wanted to kill you before, but geez, thanks for the second excuse.



○

[Piper/ Jade 675 days ago](#)

Piper tried to jerk her arm out of his grasp, suddenly realizing that while she was busy being confused over his companion, he had approached. Clearly the more immediate danger.

“YOU aren’t exactly in charge anymore, now are you?” she spat at Negaduck. “YOU are at the mercy of Malicia and...” a jerk of her head towards the witch. “Why else would you be trying to convince her to give you more time?!”

Which pretty much sealed the deal. Revealing she had overheard.

“And once Malicia finds out that you involved Lilly...” see, lightbulb— but such very poor timing in the revelation of it, “She’ll hang you from your entrails.”



○

[Negaduck 675 days ago](#)

A snarl. Full force down on that wriggling arm to lock it against the joints. Or break it, he didn't care.

Not in charge. Like Hades.

"I think you'll find..."

If Jade hadn't managed to slip away, she would be meeting that door again. Hard.

"... you have seriously miscalculated."

A punch would follow, merciless and precise, to her kidney.

Or was that the side that had so recently been broken after their last encounter?

*Whoops.*



○

[Piper/ Jade 675 days ago](#)

Jade doubled over, the muscles in her side tensing and trembling in reaction to the punch he had so kindly delivered. Black dots swarmed in front of her eyes as the air was forced out of her body— well. He could punch, she’d give him that.

As for her rib?

Steelbeak’s generosity was clearly wasted.

She inhaled sharply, grabbing onto the arm of his jacket in effort to hold herself up... or to get a grip. Through the dizzying pain, one foot pressed to the locked door and she shoved off. Right into him in hopes of knocking him flat- and thusly- off guard.

If she managed to get on top, she'd proceed to start dropping elbows onto his face. Humerus bones were incredibly strong, and did not break easily. They caused a lot of damage when utilized properly.



[Negaduck 675 days ago](#)

You know what else did not break easily?

His face.

Seriously, it took a lot of damage. Black masks came in handy.

So while one elbow snuck in, by the second, Negaduck was still with it enough to dodge to one side.

"Ooo, *feisty*."

The favour returned with a jab to her face and a throw to hopefully shift her away. As much as she probably liked being that close..

"All the more fun to flatten."

His companion merely sighed, checking over her talon like nails.

"Try not to get too much blood on the floor."

TOO much? What was that?



[Piper/ Jade 675 days ago](#)

The jab was enough to throw her off guard, so that his throw was effective. She scrambled to her feet, her hand subconsciously moving to the side he had punched. That stupid rib...

"How kind of you to worry about me spilling *his* blood on Malicia's flooring." Sarcasm. She reached out snagging some random vase and chucking it at him.

Quick glance about... windows? Window.

Lets try for that! She took off at a sprint to try and break out— second story or not... she needed to try.



[Negaduck 675 days ago](#)

The night sky. Fresh air. A two storey drop. So temptingly close.

Then suddenly so tauntingly far as Jade was wretched back by the hair.

Into something hard. A cast iron frame, or an antique trunk. It was a spare bedroom, there were plenty of hard things about.

Negaduck was looming over her, when his malicious intent was brought up short - don't you even - by his associate.

"Better she doesn't end up dead," as if it were a minor request, like ordering skim milk with coffee, or negotiating a route home.

Negaduck whipped around to face her. "Better she WHAT?!"

This doesn't help the appearance of the power dynamic you know!

"It'll be a distraction. Not to you, to.. Malicia. Right when we need her to confide in you. It doesn't mean, though, we have to play *nice*~"

A wiggle of her fingers, and the air spun around them. The charge was thrown at Jade, and if it hit, it would feel like an extraction. From her own head would flow symbols, letters, then they would disappear entirely.

"There," said the witch. "Now she has no words to tell what she's seen. Do you, dear?"

The advantage of performing magic on the at least barely conscious. Test runs!



[Piper / Jade 675 days ago](#)

Said hard thing— the corner of a nice mahogany antique trunk we'll say, left Jade's head fuzzy. She mentally cursed herself for letting her hair stay so ridiculously long...

And she was *aware* mind you. She could see Negaduck, and her brain still registered the need to get away from him... hence the half hearted floppy attempt to move. Unfortunately there was still a cloudy disconnect in there and her limbs were not quite on board with the process of motion yet.

Words were mumbles at the moment. Mentally, she was screaming at herself to get up and **move** but it seemed to be doing her little good. She was about to make another admirable attempt when she was struck with the spell.

For a brief moment... she felt highly invaded. Words, thoughts, expressions were pulled from her in what could only be described as a violent tugging. When all was said and done, her mind had a chance to clear, but she was physically exhausted.

To the witch who addressed her, she glared up through her hair and muttered what was clearly meant to be an explicative in her direction.

Nothing came out.

At all.

She tried again, louder this time— but silence resounded.

....well... I see...

Charades it was then. She flipped her the bird. Get it? Bird.



○

[Negaduck](#) *675 days ago*

The two villains exchanged a look which could only be described as, 'Good,' although their intent was less so.

"Enjoy," she gestured smoothly to Jade like she was some kind of five course platter.

Negaduck picked up a rather hefty lamp base in one hand - one that seemed comfortably familiar - and tested its weight.

All the while grinning that twisted, sadistic smile at their 'guest'.

Oh he would.