

That evening

Tuesday, September 13th

Attack Force 1

Scorpion was flying low, very low!

The three-ton helicopter was flying at what seemed like only feet above the ground as she came in from the west without lights. Scorpion was making use of her NVGs and a Forward Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) turret to see where she was flying. The flight was relatively short and very soon, Scorpion held up two fingers, indicating two minutes.

"Stand by to deploy!" Scorpion radioed.

A very fast two minutes later, *Twilight* flared and accelerated upwards forty or so feet before she came into the hover about two feet off the flat roof of the main house. The side doors were both locked back and the six-person team jumped off the helicopter - three to port and three to starboard - before they crouched down facing outwards, as the helicopter dipped forwards and rapidly increased speed. The noise coming from the twin 714-shp engines was deafening and the down-blast from the 10.8-meter, four-bladed main rotor was almost incapacitating.

Kick-Ass, along with his team: Psyche and Foxtail, prepared their weapons. On the opposite side of the landing zone, Hit Girl with her team: Jackal and Stripe, followed suit.

Attack Force 2

Over to the south, Crimson with her team: Polaris, Rigour, and La Terreaur, approached the main building.

Less than fifty yards ahead of them, they could see their target. The building was lit up and the occupants did not *appear* to be expecting an attack. The approaching team knew otherwise. While *Twilight* was fitted with silencers for her turbines, there was no hiding the sound of the rotor blades; the building's occupants *must* have heard the helicopter.

The team paused to check over their weapons and equipment before they moved onwards, towards the house.

Attack Force 3

Moving in from the west, below *Twilight's* flightpath, Drift's team appropriated the downdraught and noise from the helicopter's approach to cover their dash across the open gravel-covered area towards the main entrance to the house.

Above Drift, Nemesis, Prowl, and Glide, there was the sound of weapons' fire. Some of the weapons' fire was automatic, but some were single shots. Bright flashes could be observed coming from some of the upper windows and they could all hear the 'crump' of flashbang grenades being used high above them.

The team headed directly for the main door in an arrow formation. Nemesis had the point position, with Prowl behind and to her left. Drift was behind and to her right with Glide behind and to his right. Each member had a SIG Sauer MPX-K raised to their shoulder covering their own arc of advance. Not surprisingly, when they reached the main door, they found that it was closed and locked! Drift gave the large, wooden, blue-painted, double doors a good kick in the centre and they burst open. He moved forwards into a small entrance hall where there was another set of much heavier wooden doors. Again, they were closed and locked.

Nemesis applied a C4 demolition charge to the centre region of the two doors and then inserted a detonator. She yanked out the initiating tab then ran back outside waving everybody to take cover. The explosion when it came, was loud and bits of wood, large and small, flew out past the sheltering vigilantes and several windows shattered. There were quite a few unhappy sounding shouts and screams coming from inside the building. For good measure, Nemesis threw in a pair of flashbangs, both of which exploded a few seconds later with a blindingly bright flash and a devastatingly loud bang, as expected.

Under the cover of copious amounts of dislodged dust and plaster, the team entered the main building.

Attack Force 2

Ground Floor, South End

The six-foot-tall, six-paned, window disintegrated as Crimson fired off three breaching rounds into the wooden frame.

The crimson-clad vigilante stood to one side as Polaris, Rigour, and La Terreaur burst through the wreckage, kicking what was left out of their way. They landed in a large, high-ceilinged room which was laid out as a Library. Books towered above the three girls, otherwise, apart from some tables and chairs, the room was devoid of human presence. Without words, Rigour ran to the interior set of tall double doors. She paused beside them, listening for what might be going on, on the other side. Polaris and La Terreaur held position a few feet away, covering the closed doors.

"I have footsteps!" Rigour warned as she scrambled backwards, away from the doors. "And a weapon being cocked!"

Automatic gunfire ripped out, shredding the wooden doors, the remains of which were kicked out of the door frame as three men

burst in, shredding the shelves with bullets. They looked around, taking in the devastated window and the otherwise empty library.

"They must have jumped back out the window," one of the men stated.

"Or it was a diversion," another commented.

"You talk so much shit, the both of you," the third one growled as he studied the tables and chairs.

Almost without warning, one of the tables leapt into the air and something crimson leapt into the men's view.

"You should listen to your pal, next time," Crimson suggested as she gunned down all three men.

"Not that there's gonna be a next time," Polaris growled as she put a bullet into one of the men who was still twitching.

Attack Force 1

Second Floor

The helicopter had dropped them off onto the flat roof of the main building just as the other teams were beginning their coordinated assaults.

Kick-Ass and Psyche had gone first, sliding down the old lead tiles to the balustrade below. Hit Girl and Foxtail followed, both pairs taking up positions beside a window. Jackal and Stripe kept watch from the rooftop as their colleagues smashed open windows and threw in flashbang grenades before standing back and avoiding the flying glass and wood splinters.

Jackal joined up with Hit Girl and Foxtail while Stripe joined Kick-Ass and Psyche. Each team took a window and dived through into what appeared to be staff quarters. Naturally, the majority of the staff were elsewhere in the house which meant very few pickings. Stripe, it appeared, was very angry with anybody who was involved with the mistreatment of *Predators* - and he showed it! The first person he came across was barely able to move a muscle before Stripe flipped the woman over and smashed her head against a door frame, leaving fresh blood on the gloss paintwork. A quick check showed that the woman had been armed with a pistol, despite her uniform which indicated that she was a maid.

"Hope that's not how you treat *all* your girlfriends, Stripe," Psyche commented as she headed further down the corridor.

Attack Force 3

Ground Floor, West Side

As Nemesis' boots crunched through the broken glass, wood chips, and discarded plaster, she could see at least three dead bodies and several live ones.

The live ones squirmed with their hands over their ears; each was rapidly put out of their misery with single shots to the head. The team found themselves standing in a large, high-ceilinged entrance hall. There was an enormous fireplace, over to the right and three exits; a large wooden door to the left, with a smaller wooden one about six feet past it, and a large open archway in the far right corner just beyond the fireplace. The floor beneath their feet was wood and the walls were covered in a dark wood panelling. Gunfire could be heard from beyond the archway. The smaller door over to the left was open, so Glide and Prowl moved over to cover the potential threat sources of the doorway and the archway.

Drift and Nemesis made for the larger wooden door and Drift kicked it open for Nemesis to dive inside. She came up and scanned the room which had a large snooker table in the centre and comfortable seating around the walls. It had the same high ceiling and several large floor-to-ceiling windows. Nemesis and Drift proceeded down the room in tandem checking each nook and cranny. At the far end of the room there was a single door in the right-hand corner - it was opening as they watched. The muzzle and barrel of a pistol appeared, followed by a head.

Nemesis then splattered that very same head over the tastefully painted wall with a single bullet.

Attack Force 2

Ground Floor, South End

Crimson and Polaris moved out of the library.

Echoing around the house and mostly coming from upstairs, they could hear shouts, screams, and gunshots, with the occasional crash of a flashbang or the larger bang of an explosive hand grenade. As Rigour and La Terreaur joined them, they found themselves in a long room with the same high ceiling and dark wood panelling along the walls. At the near end, beside them, were two large glass doors which led outside. Leading off each side of the room were two pairs of doors, arranged opposite each other. They had just come through one of those doorways. Another was a few feet away opposite them, with the other pair right down the far end. Past those doors, there was another doorway and over to the right, there was a large wooden staircase sweeping upwards and turning to the left. Over to the far left corner, there was a large open archway.

From their current position, they were unable to see if the further pair of doors were open or closed. The door directly ahead of them was closed - well, it was until Crimson kicked open the doors and Polaris lobbed a hand grenade into the room before jumping back away

from the doorway. The team awaited the explosion with baited breath. Just before the explosion, they heard screams and yells which were rapidly cut short as the grenade exploded with a deafening crash. The explosion was followed by a large crashing sound and a cloud of dust and plaster exploded out of the door. Once the majority of the dust had died down, Polaris and Rigour dived through the damaged doors and swept into the room. They found two dead bodies which had *not* been killed by the grenade directly. In the centre of the room, there was originally a large crystal chandelier hanging from the ceiling but the grenade must have dislodged it and the chandelier had crashed down on top of the two men. All of the windows had been blown out, with no glass remaining in the frames. Sections of wood panelling had also come off the walls. Three men and a woman were dead.

As the team left the room and moved down the long room, they saw several shapes appear from the archway over to the left.

Attack Force 1

Second Floor

The building was extensive.

There were many rooms, cupboards, and dark spaces, all of which needed to be searched. It made the progress slow going, but they were *not* taking *any* chances.

"Oh, fuck!" Psyche commented as she found herself face to face with a Claymore mine. "Nobody move!"

Everybody froze as the ten-year-old followed the triggering wire to the detonator and then to a tripwire. With practised ease, Psyche disconnected the triggering wire and then released the tripwire.

"All clear!"

"Well done," Kick-Ass commented with a squeeze to his daughter's left shoulder.

"That was dangerous, leaving that there; any kid could have found it," Psyche commented.

"A kid did find it," Foxtail commented dryly.

"Ha, fucking ha!"

"Enough bickering!" Hit Girl growled. "You two *Predator Princesses* better get a move on - well done, Psyche!"

"Ha!" Psyche threw back at Foxtail as she strolled past.

Stripe just shrugged and followed Psyche.

"Please tell me, Kick-Ass. Was I ever *that* obnoxious?" Hit Girl asked.

"No, definitely not. . ."

"Good to know."

". . . You were way worse!"

Kick-Ass chuckled as he left a fuming Hit Girl standing alone in the corridor.

Twilight

As Scorpion flew over the main house in a wide orbit, keeping an eye open for trouble, her electronic warfare suite lit up.

"*Twilight* is defensive! I'm being locked up!"

Scorpion accelerated and climbed vertically, triggering off a dazzling array of flares and chaff into her wake. Her AN/AAR-57 electronic warfare suite indicated the direction of the threat and the heads-up-display in her helmet directed her towards an interdiction position from where she could counterattack her attacker. The target quickly came into sight: It was a Land Rover 120 fitted with a triple Javelin launcher in the flatbed.

The attached laser tracker was attempting to lock onto *Twilight*.

Attack Force 3

Ground Floor, West Side

Prowl and Glide went first with Nemesis following.

Crimson and La Terreur kept a lookout, covering their fellow vigilantes' backs. They passed through the large open archway. There had just been a large explosion down the far end of a long hall, followed by gunshots. Attack Force 2 was expected from that direction but it would not do to take chances.

"Big Daddy!" came a call out of the semi-darkness and swirling smoke.

Nemesis smiled as she yelled back the response to the challenge.

"May the D'Amico's rot in hell!"

Out of the smoke, came the very recognisable form of Polaris, followed by Rigour and Fury. Crimson was very pleased to see her friends and all in one piece and uninjured, too. The *Predators* tapped fists all round - they were too professional to go in for hugs during combat, even if that was what they would have preferred.

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Together, the two teams kicked down the two remaining double sets of doors to clear what turned out to be empty rooms. That left a single door which was locked.

"I'll take care of this," Glide commented as she produced a quarter block of C4 and a compact detonator from her utility belt.

With considerable care and skill, she attached the C4 to the door and then she added the detonator. She tugged the short plastic strip which initiated the timed detonation sequence and she stepped back smartly, waving everybody into cover. A few seconds later there was a small 'crump' as the lock on the door was vaporised. Nemesis waved Prowl and Glide forward into what turned out to be a private study.

"Polaris, crank in one of Q's 'hack-me-quick' devices into that computer," Crimson directed.

The young girl dug a small USB device out of her utility belt and she inserted it into a slimline computer which sat on the desk.

"Q, you getting anything?" Polaris radioed.

"Connecting now, Polaris . . . looking good; downloading is under way."

"Copy that - we got some killin' to do!" Polaris replied.

Twilight

The Javelin operator moved his weapon system around to keep the targeting laser locked on to *Twilight*.

But Scorpion was having none of it and before he could fire, Scorpion triggered off a pair of CRV7 2.75-inch unguided rockets, one from each pod and they flew in his direction at over 1,000 metres per second.

Both 4.5-kg high-explosive warheads detonated on impact and the man, plus his missiles vanished in a spreading cloud of flame while *Twilight* flew through over the wreckage unscathed. Scorpion took up a new orbit, constantly altering the orbit to confuse any watchers. There had not been any intelligence to point towards surface-to-air weapons, but Scorpion had been ready and it also confirmed that Fraser had his fingers in some serious pies.

High above *Twilight*, the EAGLE-1 UAV orbited, its sensors searching for trouble.

Attack Force 1

Second Floor

Foxtail was on point and she stopped when she heard a noise over to her right.

She raised her left hand which was clenched into a fist. Those following her stopped and took up covering positions. Foxtail indicated hearing a noise from beyond a closed door to the right. The door actually turned out to be a set of double doors and Foxtail kicked them open, while Psyche covered her friend with her weapon. Stripe threw in a flashbang and Hit Girl followed close behind with Kick-Ass and Jackal, almost immediately after the detonation. Four men were in the room and each was shot, in rapid succession, with a three-round burst.

Hit Girl's ears perked up as she recognised the sound of a submachine gun being cocked, closely followed by an identical sound. Both came from the other side of the false wall beside them.

"Get the fuck down!" Hit Girl growled loudly and everybody dove the floor just as the wall beside them was very quickly turned into Swiss cheese by around sixty 5.56-millimetre bullets.

The moment the bullets stopped, Kick-Ass jumped up and he smashed through what was left of the wall. Hit Girl followed behind and she calmly gunned down the two men who had turned the wall into Swiss cheese. A man jumped up from a far corner of the room and he fired off several shots from a pistol into Hit Girl's chest armour. The man, in turn, was almost cut in half and shredded as Psyche emptied an entire magazine into his torso.

"You okay?" she asked Hit Girl.

"Thanks, Psyche - but that was a little over the top."

"He earned every bloody bullet!"

"Nobody shoots Hit Girl when I'm about . . . and survives," Psyche growled.

"I love you, too, honey!" Hit Girl chuckled.

Primary Rendezvous Point

Half a mile to the east

The Primary Rendezvous Point (RV) was hidden from the main house in a copse of trees.

All the vehicles were laagered together with the Command Van as the focus. The RV was being guarded by Astute and his daughter, Stormtide. Mindy being Mindy, she had brought spare clothing for Shannon and Jamie, just in case. As soon as they had parked up at the RV and the teams had moved off to attack the main house, Shannon had unwrapped herself from the thick blanket which was keeping her warm. While her father stood guard, she had stripped off her wet clothing and towelled herself dry. The clothing which Hit Girl had handed her was a very good fit. There had been knickers, a sports bra, jeans, and a T-shirt, plus socks, a pair of boots, and a rain jacket. Once fully dressed, she opened the back door of the Range

Rover Sentinel and slipped outside into the rain, pulling up the hood of the jacket.

"You know how to use one of these?" her father asked as he passed over a SIG Sauer MPX-K.

Shannon glared at her father as she removed the magazine before expertly clearing the weapon and then returning the magazine into place and cocking the weapon. Patrick nodded his approval but Shannon, despite her earlier happiness at being rescued from her life of hell and finding her father, just glared.

"Get this on, please, honey - I don't want to lose you again."

Shannon took the offered body armour and she strapped it on over the jacket with her father's help. He pulled the straps tight and made sure that it was secure.

"I hated you," she began. "I hated you for ages. When I was taken - I was only a block away from home - I was so scared. Then they took me to a place that could only be described as hell. A boy forced me to strip naked in front of him and within sight of other kids - boys and girls - he then made me chuck my clothing into a dumpster. I was forced to parade myself, stark naked, down corridor after corridor. I was sobbing, wishing that my Daddy would come to rescue me. Then they made me shower with a group of boys and they cut off my hair - my lovely hair was taken from me."

Patrick Millar grimaced. Shannon had loved her flowing hair which had been very long and thick. For her to lose it, at only nine-years-old would have been very hard for you - not to mention all the other degradations forced upon her.

"After two weeks, one of the bastard instructors explained to me why I was being treated so harshly. He said that it was because of my father. I was devastated to find out that my own father had been an *Urban Predator* instructor - I hated you from that moment on. I swore that if I ever saw you again . . . I swore that I would kill you. I blamed you for every injustice. I blamed you for every bad thing that happened to me. Then, after about a year, I began to think differently - I decided to give you a chance at explaining yourself. You had a family - you had me, you had my brother and sister; I could not understand how you could have betrayed me."

Patrick braced up, feeling very sad, but he did not react as his eldest daughter turned her weapon on him. He looked straight down the barrel.

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"When I helped bring about *Urban Predator*, it had a noble plan. When we recruited Lucy and Leo, they were the ultimate example of what we were doing. We were to take homeless kids with no future and we were going to give them a future. They were to be trained as assassins in Hit Girl's image. But then some dumb fuck decided to change that and about half of the First Intake were boys and girls who had been

abducted from happy lives with families. Shannon - when I began to question what was happening, I was warned off. They transferred me - I accepted on condition that they left my family alone. I found out soon after I had left that you had been taken. I was naïve enough to not immediately consider that you had been taken by those bastards.

"When I tried to trace you, I kept hitting brick walls. That was when I knew that they had you. But what could I do - I was but one person against the sinister forces of the CIA. I did everything that I could to track you down. I came across another CIA agent who had reason to hate Urban Predator. She was killed in Europe, back in May. Then I picked up your trail in Whitby. I saw that boy on the bridge, shooting at those CIA assholes. I tracked you both across the country, York, Nottingham, London. I was very impressed when you tortured those two women to get the location of your friend - yes, I was watching you. I tried to intervene with Jamie when they took him but I was out of position. Did you enjoy getting that tattoo? Must have hurt."

Shannon felt all the pent-up hate for her father vanish.

"That, was you?"

"It was."

"Yes, it hurt!"

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"I'm sorry, Daddy," Shannon said as she lowered the weapon.

"So am I, champ. I know you're not my little girl anymore but I'm real proud of how you've turned out and I know your Mom will be so happy to see you again."

"Does she know about what happened to me?"

"Yes, she does - that was not easy, telling her."

"Does she know that you've found me?"

"Not yet - we can call her once all this is over."

"Thank you, Daddy."

"Now, let's get back to protecting these vehicles or we'll *both* be answering to Hit Girl!"

Over to the Southwest

It was almost impossible to see the prone form as she lay absolutely still to one side of the field.

Her eyes and ears tracked everything that moved within a thousand yards. Beside her, she had an eight-inch screen relaying information from the UAV, high above her. She had preselected six locations for her perches. The current perch allowed her to cover the rearmost

advances to the main house - which just happened to be the direction from which the main garrison would arrive. The UAV had identified the heat-blooms of six vehicles and over thirty bodies. Within another minute, they would parade before her and then she would start taking lives.

The Accuracy International AS50 sniper rifle was among the top rifles in the world and used by the best in the world. The weapon held five rounds and could snap off a full magazine in around 1.6 seconds. For the night, Leon had a heavy load of twenty magazines in her pack. Each magazine held five .50-calibre BMG rounds. She had a selection of rounds available: standard ball, tracer, armour-piercing, and incendiary. The weapon could disable a vehicle with just a single round, just as it could tear apart a human being.

Leon smiled as she controlled her breathing, lining up her sights and mentally ordering her targets. Her first round was to be armour-piercing. She adjusted her sights to take into account the wind and the rain and then settled the aiming reticule on her first target, moments later, she squeezed the trigger.

Scorpio Garrison Commander

Nobody had expected the attack that evening.

The intelligence had, however, expected the attack within a few days. Site B had been attacked only a little over an hour before with light casualties. Suddenly the main house had been assaulted from teams on the ground and from the air. Devastating firepower was being used to counter Scorpio's heavier weapons, such as the Javelin battery - which was being rapidly replaced. His men had been preparing for the upcoming attack, but it had taken them time to ready themselves and the intention had been to move out and protect Site B. Then the attack had begun and contact with security staff at the main house had ceased.

The commander had watched the main house through a night-scope and through the rain, he had seen the flashes of pyrotechnics. He had also heard the steady beat of rotor blades above them. The helicopter was obviously heavily armed as the Javelin battery had discovered to its cost. The Boss was not happy and he was headed down from his house three miles away, to take personal control of the situation. Nobody had any idea, yet, how many losses they had taken, nor for that matter, who the enemy actually was. His intention was to. . .

The armoured 4x4 in which he rode was shaken as something struck the engine compartment and then the vehicle ground to a halt. The driver tried to restart the engine but while the starter turned for a second, it stopped and refused to turn again. Smoke crawled out from under the bonnet and . . . the heads of both the driver and the front passenger exploded a milli-second apart, showering the other occupants of the vehicle with blood, bone, and brain matter. The

commander and the man beside him rapidly dived out of the vehicle and to the soggy, muddy, ground. The vehicle immediately behind had met the same fate and the engine was smoking.

"Get the fuck out of the vehicles!" he ordered over the radio and his men quickly dived to the ground.

There was a resounding clang as something struck the next vehicle along - a sniper!

Attack Force 2: Crimson, Polaris, Rigour, Fury

Attack Force 3: Drift, Nemesis, Prowl, Glide, La Terreur

Ground Floor

The combined teams moved out with Polaris and Prowl on point.

They passed through the main entrance hall and then headed down a corridor. The corridor was about twenty yards long and had four doors and an archway leading from it, down near the end of the corridor and to the right. Rooms were cleared they were passed - they were nothing special, mainly store rooms. No opposition was found in any of the rooms giving everybody a short but much appreciated, breather. At the end of the corridor were the kitchens. They did not take long to clear as they were relatively open-plan.

Once the kitchens had been cleared, the combined teams moved through the archway. Behind the main house were several buildings that were attached to the main building by a long corridor that ran beside a laundry and some store rooms. The corridor was about eighty yards in length and ended at two doorways, one to the right and one directly in front.

At that point, the two teams split up, with Crimson and her team headed to the right while Drift took his team straight ahead.

Attack Force 3

Nemesis pulled open the door and Prowl moved into a large room that was obviously used for changing and there were showers off to the left. The security personnel who used the place were either dead or elsewhere in the facility. Glide and La Terreur cleared the showers before the team moved on.

Prowl was on point as she passed through an archway. Out of nowhere, she was attacked from her right by a man armed with a pistol and a combat machete. She expertly blocked the man's weapon with her assault rifle and she tried to push him back but his machete came down again. Prowl kicked out and broke the man's left knee, which stopped his attack and he fell to the floor screaming. Glide was close behind and she shot the screaming man in the head with a single bullet. The team was no much warier of advancing. The

security force had apparently sorted itself out and were now using ambush tactics to improve their chances against their attackers.

Prowl listened for even the minutest sound that came from around her and the team. Then, a dozen yards ahead, she was ready and she raised her left hand in a clenched fist to warn everybody. The team stopped and Prowl deployed the Bagh Naka embedded into her left gauntlet. The razor sharp curved claws were lethal. With her right hand, she passed her assault rifle behind her to Glide and pulled out her six-inch combat knife. Somebody was here, almost directly in front of her. With a nod from Nemesis, indicating that she was covered from behind, Prowl moved forwards, sensing her surroundings. There was movement in the darkness and as she was attacked, she pirouetted around and seized hold of the attacker's neck with her left gauntlet, sinking the claws into the soft skin and ripping open the carotid artery. The attacker was a woman but Prowl paid no heed as she sank the blade of her knife into the bitch's chest, severing her heart in two. The woman was all but dead as she sank silently to the floor. Prowl pulled out the blood-soaked blade and triggered her equally bloody claws to retract.

La Terreur had swept up the combat machete from the previous kill and she ran forwards, stabbing into the darkness just beyond Prowl. The young girl had caught a movement and attacked, knowing that there was no time to alert Prowl, nor time for her to react. La Terreur pushed her attack hard, forcing the attacker backwards until she hit the wall. The French Predator could see fear in her eyes as she knew that death was coming.

"Mourir comme l'écume que vous êtes et puis pourrir dans l'enfer pour toute l'éternité," she hissed as the woman slumped to the floor.

"What was that?" Prowl asked.

"Die like the scum you are and then rot in hell for all eternity - or something like that," Q reported from the command van.

"Exactly," La Terreur offered coldly as she wiped off the combat machete on the dead woman's clothing.

"Damn - you are cold!" Glide commented.

Attack Force 2

After leaving the other team, Polaris took point and led her team into the unknown.

They passed through a set of double doors which opened up into a large open area. *Twilight* could be heard orbiting almost directly above. It was comforting to know that the helicopter was there in close support. Rigour and Fury went from room to room, finding nothing. Crimson kept watch on their backs while Polaris kept watch on an opening at the far left corner of the open area. Once the four

rooms had been cleared, Crimson and Polaris peered down the next corridor which had several doors leading from it. The corridor was not straight and it had a slight turn to the right about twenty yards down, so they could not see what was at the far end of the corridor.

Slowly and stealthily, Polaris and Fury moved forwards, towards the first door on the left while Rigour kept watch down the corridor. Polaris kicked open the door and Fury dived in rolling up to one knee and . . . Fury paused as she felt something against the side of her head.

It was the barrel of an assault rifle.

Fury considered the odds of survival and she came up with some pretty poor numbers.

Attack Force 3

Ground Floor

Prowl was back on point - she enjoyed being the first to spot danger.

She just ignored the fact that she could also be the first to enter into contact with an unknown enemy at any moment. Prowl had led the team through into a large room which looked to be a recreational facility for those on guard duty. As would be expected during an attack, it was empty, with half-eaten sandwiches and pizzas scattered on tables along with abandoned cups of coffee. With Glide and Nemesis providing direct cover, Prowl reached for the door handle of the opposite door leading out of the room. The door suddenly burst open and a small form rolled into the room before coming up ready to engage.

Prowl placed the muzzle of her assault rifle against the invader's temple and she squeezed the trigger.

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The trigger of the MPX assault rifle required a pressure of 4.25-pounds of pressure to break and then initiate the sequence which resulted in a bullet exciting the muzzle and spinning towards its target.

As Prowl's finger tightened on the trigger, she registered a voice calling out.

"Prowl, stand down, for the love of God!"

At 4.1-pounds of increasing pressure, Prowl released the trigger and she looked up at Nemesis, then down at her intended victim. Prowl's brain registered the compact combat suit worn by Fury and she suddenly felt a chill shoot up her backbone.

"Fuck!" the nine-year-old growled as she held out a hand to Fury.

The hand was gratefully taken and Fury stood up before nodding at her friend. Nemesis breathed a huge sigh of relief as she got back to the plan.

"Let's go - we have a corridor to clear!"

Attack Force 2 & 3

Ground Floor

Both teams moved down the corridor.

As they passed each doorway, a pair of vigilantes cleared each room. After four rooms were cleared, with no gunmen or anybody else found, they all started to get a little bit concerned. What might be waiting for them around the bend in the corridor?

"Anybody got any flashbangs or grenades?" Nemesis asked.

"Fresh out," Drift replied.

"Well, we'll just have to use good old-fashioned brawn and courage," Crimson suggested.

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A few minutes later, Nemesis was leaning against the wall at the bend in the corridor and she held a mirror in her hand. She gently eased it out past the bend and the far end of the corridor came into view. Two doors were visible, one on either side of the corridor, about fifteen feet away - that was the good news. As Nemesis studied the image, she could make out the shape of a man crouching in each doorway. Further down, past the two doors, right at the end of the corridor was a set of double doors and in front of the doors were another four gunmen. All had large weapons in evidence, which were probably assault rifles. Nemesis relayed everything that she saw back to the two teams who were awaiting the assault down the corridor.

Polaris and Prowl went first, crawling into position and sending automatic gunfire down the corridor to keep the gunmen's heads down. Behind them, Glide and La Terreaur took aimed shots at the gunmen in the doorways, dropping both within seconds. The four remaining gunmen sent bursts of automatic fire back down the corridor while avoiding the accurate gunfire of Polaris and Prowl. Three men fell before the fourth pushed through the double doors at the far end of the corridor and vanished.

Crimson and Drift ran forwards, kicking in the doors to the final rooms and clearing both. Nemesis and Polaris pushed through the double doors to find themselves under sustained gunfire from the escaping gunman. They both dived to the floor before Polaris

outflanked the man and while his attentions were on Nemesis, she shot him in the head.

"Command, Nemesis! Ground floor clear!"

*The story continues in **Chapter 21: A Bonus Twist of Predator.***