

That night . . .

Wednesday, 13th July, 2016

Oakland Quay, Canary Wharf

It was a little after one o'clock in the morning as Stormtide made her assault on the building.

Earlier that day, in between scouting out the building, she had been shopping. Stormtide was clad from head to toe in dark grey. No skin was visible as she skirted the boundary of the facility. She had mapped out all the security sensors and then committed their locations to memory. At night, there was no overt or covert security outside the facility but the electronic sensors were turned right up. Only, whomsoever had set up the security had not counted on somebody small infiltrating the facility.

Stormtide's slender body was perfect for the task as she slid beneath the laser sensors that ringed the easy access points. Statistically, the security guards on duty would be at their lowest ebb as she approached them, increasing her chances. A very pissed off William Fraser had stormed out of the building earlier that day – he had appeared wounded but Shannon could not be certain. Either way, she had seen the immense relief on those who remained in the building – they did not seem to like their boss and like most underlings, they thrived when not in the direct eye of their master and overseer.

One effect of the man leaving the premises was that the security had noticeably slackened.

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As she approached the rear loading dock, within the building's boundary, Stormtide studied the cameras set inside darkened hemispherical domes. Through her infra-red night-vision headgear, she was able to detect the small heat emissions from the de-mist system in the camera as it moved. Once the nearest camera was pointing away from her, she dashed forwards and rolled into the loading dock, stopping against the concrete buffer above which was a large steel rolling shutter, one of five similar shutters.

There was a sound from above her and off to the side of the shutters. A security door had been opened – it was the security guard on his hourly rounds, checking out the loading dock.

"Two-eight, loading dock clear, over."

"Copy, loading dock clear – go get yourself a coffee. Out."

Stormtide kept out of sight, in the shadows, until the man turned back towards the open doorway. Then, she moved – she moved fast. As the guard passed through the door, he pulled it closed behind him. Before the security guard knew what was happening, his feet were swept out from under him and he found himself being dragged down the corridor and into an empty office that belonged to the Loading Dock Supervisor.

The man held his hands out as he found himself gazing down the nine-millimetre barrel of Stormtide's Heckler & Koch P30K Compact pistol with attached suppressor.

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After retrieving the man's access card, Stormtide glared down at the man. He was just a guy undertaking a shit job doing shit hours for a shit weekly pay packet. However, he fought back,

kicking out at Stormtide who was ready for any form of resistance – as a result, the man was pistol whipped, breaking his nose and sending a glob of blood flying across the room.

“You resist, I fucking kill you, and then I move onto one of your fuck-buddies.”

Stormtide had noticed that the security door by the loading dock had both a swipe and a keypad – she needed more.

“Give me the code!” she growled.

“Fuck you. . .”

Stormtide yanked off the man’s left boot, followed by his sock. She rammed the man’s sock into his own mouth and then shot him in the foot. The scream was muffled and the man struggled to control himself as his foot jerked with the pain. Stormtide nonchalantly helped herself to an unopened can of Dr Pepper which sat on a desk, popping it open and taking a swig.

“You calmed down now? What a pathetic wus! The code?”

Stormtide pulled out the sock. The man was very angry – understandable as he had just gained a nine-millimetre hole in his right foot.

“When I . . . get my hands on. . .”

“Wrong answer!”

Once the sock was replaced, Stormtide reversed the pistol and she brought the butt down onto the man’s little toe. The already damaged foot jerked as more blood spewed out after the toe curling crunch of bone. The man’s face contorted in agony as Stormtide took another sip of Dr Pepper.

“Ewww – I’ve got bits of your toe on my pistol!”

Ten minutes later, Stormtide slunk down another corridor, the access card in her pocket and the six-digit code in her brain. She had shot the guard in the head, putting him out of his misery.

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Stormtide stopped at a fire panel where there was a plan of each floor in the building.

There were two subterranean levels, the lower of which had very little detail as to what was down there. All the other levels showed high detail for the layout and that made the lowest level a good place to start the search. The access card and the code released an access door to the stairs where Stormtide headed downwards, her pistol held out ahead of her. The first subterranean level was quickly bypassed and she headed directly to the next level below.

The door to the lowest level had a heftier door than all the others. Stormtide smiled; she was close to her target, she was certain of it. She also knew that she was short on time – the dead fuck by loading bay would be missed very soon – there was also the chance of coming across a roving security guard, too. With a swipe of the card and the punching of six buttons, Stormtide was through the access door.

“Who the hell are you?”

“Fuck!” Stormtide breathed as she found herself face to face with a large man dressed in a security guard uniform. “I don’t have time to fuck about with wankers. . .”

The security guard was reaching for his radio – his hand never made it as his left wrist was shattered by the pistol which came down hard before moving upwards and catching him across the jaw, dislocating the right side. Before he could scream out, Stormtide smashed her fist into his temple putting him out cold.

The guard was a bonus – it meant that she was on the right track.

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Stormtide found herself in a corridor – the security guard had appeared out of a security office, to her left. To the right was another security door which led into a small vestibule. Off that vestibule, there were three doors. Stormtide studied the door ahead of her – to the *Predator*, it yelled ‘cell’. She swiped the access card, then punched in the code. Her mind was racing and she wished – she wished so much that she might find a young *Predator* behind that cell door. . . The door clicked open and Stormtide came face to face with a *Predator* – just not the *Predator* whom she had been expecting.

“I know you. . .” she growled as she levelled her suppressed pistol at the young girl who had sat up in her bed, instantly alert.

Shannon was checked over, up and down, by the young girl who slowly swung her bare legs around onto the floor.

“You’re here for Jamie.”

It was more statement than question. Shannon’s eyes narrowed.

“I’ve known him for a while – since he was a yellow . . . he never told you he was a yellow?”

Shannon shook her head, intrigued, as the girl stood up.

“Is he . . .?”

“Alive? Yes, he is – well, he was when I saw him yesterday; he managed to get himself Tasered.”

Stormtide smiled to herself – Jamie could not keep out of trouble for a second.

“I can help you find him; but you’ve gotta trust me. They call me Fury – you?”

“Stormtide. Do anything I don’t like and I pop a bullet through your smart-arsed brain. Kneel!”

Fury did so and she tilted her head to one side while Stormtide checked behind her right ear. Stormtide grunted in satisfaction and she growled at the girl.

“Get dressed.”

The radio which Stormtide had taken from the first security guard came to life.

“Two-eight, you finished your coffee, yet?”

“We need to move,” Stormtide pointed out.

Fury quickly pulled on some trousers, a T-shirt, and a pair of trainers.

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Fury raised an eyebrow as she saw the unconscious security guard stretched out on the floor. She noticed Stormtide ignoring the man as she made for the stairs.

“Remind me never to piss you off, Stormtide,” Fury commented.

“Where is he?” Stormtide demanded impatiently.

“They last had him in a holding room, up on the fifth floor.”

“Let’s move – stairs.”

The two girls ran up the stairs, Stormtide keeping Fury in sight at all times. The younger, ten-year-old girl was fit and fast as she used her long legs to leap up the steps two at a time. They were both breathing heavily by the time they had reached the fifth floor. Before they left the stairwell, Fury turned to Stormtide.

“There are bad people here – and I have no idea what we are going to find; just bear that in mind, okay.”

“Okay.”

The two *Predators* ran down the corridor and Fury stopped outside a door. Stormtide took a deep breath and after swiping the card and punching in the code, she pushed open the door. Her heart was racing in anticipation of what she might find . . .

Stormtide’s heart sank, lower than it had been in days; the room was empty.

Then it just got worse as alarms began to blare.

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“Now what, shit-head?” Stormtide demanded.

“We find somebody who knows where he’s been taken,” Fury replied evenly.

“Lead on, Fury!”

Fury took off down the corridor with Stormtide running along behind. They made it half way to the stairs when a door opened and two security guards appeared a few yards away. Unfortunately for them, they did not notice the two girls until it was too late. Fury took one guard down within seconds, closely followed by Stormtide a second behind. They rushed to the stairs and . . .

“Well, well – *two* bad little bitches,” Kevin drawled from the landing below. “I am going to make you two wish that you were never born. . .”

Stormtide dove to the ground, dragging Fury down with her, as bullets peppered the wall above them.

“Didn’t know you cared!” Fury laughed.

“I don’t – but I need you to help me find Jamie.”

“I can accept that.”

Stormtide returned fire until her magazine was empty.

“No reloads?” Fury enquired.

“No reloads,” Stormtide confirmed as the gunfire ceased – Kevin was reloading.

Without any warning, Fury jumped up and she dived at the incredulous man a dozen steps below. Stormtide was a little stunned, but she knew that *Predators* took chances when needed. Fury struck Kevin as he tried to bring his pistol to bear on the flying girl. Her impetus knocked him off his feet and cushioned Fury's fall.

By the time Stormtide reached the landing, Fury was smashing her fists into Kevin's face. He had dropped his pistol and was doing his best to shield himself from the wild girl who was attacking him. He got in a punch, sending Fury backwards where she screamed out in pain as she struck the staircase balustrade. Stormtide pulled the girl back to her feet and kicked out at Kevin, smashing some teeth.

"Where is he?" she demanded angrily as she seized up his pistol and aimed it at his face.

"Your little friend is gone," Kevin breathed through his broken teeth and the blood which flowed steadily down his face and jaw from his smashed nose and mouth.

"Where is he?" the very angry Stormtide repeated.

"We sold the little fuck to the Russians . . . he's fucking paedo bait now, bitch!" Kevin was almost laughing as Stormtide rammed her fist into his face and then her pointed fingers into his throat, smashing his larynx.

"Let's go," Stormtide said to Fury.

Neither girl never gave the man another glance as he choked away the few remaining seconds of his life.

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"No – I won't believe it," Stormtide yelled as she jumped down each flight of stairs.

"The security booth – ground floor; they'll know if he left the building," Fury suggested as she followed Stormtide.

They left two unconscious security guards in their wake as they made their way to the security booth. Once there, Stormtide was in no mood for niceties as she stormed the suite of rooms, shooting five security guards in the legs in a mini blitzkrieg. Fury quickly shut off the alarms just as the phone rang.

"*What in hell's name is going on down there?*" William Fraser demanded as Fury answered the call.

"Everything's under control – situation normal," Fury replied.

"*What happened?*"

"We had a slight weapons malfunction but everything's perfectly alright now. We're fine . . . we're all fine here . . . now, thank you. How are you?"

"*Who is this?*"

"You worst nightmare, arsehole!" Fury yelled as she cut the connection. "Boring conversation anyway!"

Stormtide ignored Fury's antics and faced the five wincing security guards.

"No more warning shots – I just want one question answered: where is the boy?"

A few glances were exchanged before there was a cavalcade of sound as all five yelled out together.

“One at a fucking time!”

“Sub-Level One – Detention Room.”

“We have seconds before we’re overwhelmed,” Fury warned.

“I know, dammit!”

They raced along to the stairs and took them five at a time before they burst through the security door onto Sub-Level One. Stormtide was not wasting time; she shot the two security guards in the head as she ran before stopping outside the Detention Room.

“Oh, God, please,” she muttered as she swiped the access card and punched in the code.

The door was kicked open by Fury and Stormtide burst inside.

“Took you fucking long enough!”

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Rage looked up into Stormtide’s grey-blue eyes and he grinned.

“You make one hell of a fucking racket,” he quipped as Stormtide pulled him into a hug.

“Ungrateful little shit. . .”

“Thanks for coming after me, Stormy.”

“Hope you were fucking worth it.”

“Oh, I am, I am . . . err, are you going to hug me all night, or are we going to get the hell away from this shit hole?”

“Oh, yeah, sorry. . .” Stormtide replied sheepishly as she released the boy. “Shit is about to hit the fan. . .”

Stormtide pulled the boy out of the room and they both ran down the corridor and towards the exit. Where was Fury? Rage grinned as he saw the dead bodies.

“Anyone ever told you that you’re a messy bitch?”

Stormtide ignored him as they scrambled up the stairs and then they burst outside through a fire-escape. Rage froze as he saw somebody vanishing around a corner a couple dozen yards away.

“Fuck!” Jamie exclaimed as he saw the young girl for just a fleeting moment. “Abigail?”

“Who?”

“Abigail,” Jamie replied – as if that answered everything.

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“What, or who, is Abigail?”

“An old friend I haven’t seen in over a year. . .”

Jamie took off after the girl – they were headed *away* from the building, so Shannon just took off after Jamie. Jamie rounded the corner and he saw a flurry of dark brown hair as it took off down an alleyway. Without a thought for his surroundings, the boy ran forwards but as he approached the alleyway . . . Jamie was poleaxed by an arm which suddenly stuck out at neck height and he went crashing to the tarmac. Before he could move, a foot was placed squarely on his upper chest and a pistol was thrust in his face. A very angry looking girl glared down at him. The hazel eyes were instantly familiar – especially in their angry state – as was the long, dark brown hair tied up in a single plait.

“If you know what’s good for you, you’ll stay away from me, Carter – you understand me?” the girl growled.

“Abigail. . .”

“Do – you – un – der – stand – me?” the girl reiterated slowly as she tapped him hard on the head with the muzzle of her pistol in time with each syllable.

“Fuck – ow – yes . . . geroffme!”

“I’m trouble, Jamie – I’m not who I used to be; I’m glad you’re free, I really am – please don’t try and find me . . . please . . .”

With that, Abigail Wilde AKA Fury pulled Jamie up by his collar and then she kissed him on the lips before she dropped the dazed boy back to the ground and ran.

“So, I’m not the *only* girl you’ve pissed off!” Shannon stated evenly.

Jamie just lay on the ground with a growing smile on his lips.

“You just going to lie there? Maybe I should just tell the Police to ignore you when they arrive?”

“Oh, yeah – let’s go!”

“That pistol – it was empty,” Shannon said conversationally as they ran from the scene.

“What?”

“She took my empty pistol.”

“You got a new one?”

“Yeah – but I’m going to have to ditch it.”

“Needs must.”