

**Wednesday, August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**Bournemouth, Dorset**

Stormtide was trying to figure out if they were warning shots, serious shots, or just maybe: scare the fuck out of the little shits shots.

She figured that Scorpio had to have some competent shooters, so they had to be warning shoots - her reasoning was that they had both been easy targets for at least a mile before Rage had even noticed that they were there. It was obvious that nobody was too bothered about firing off bullets in a densely-populated seaside resort full of tourists and innocent people who they might just turn into collateral damage. Some of the shots were getting closer and closer which scared the hell out of the teenaged assassin. Rage was a little more nervous as he was *behind* Stormtide and therefore, *he* would be struck first while he acted as a human shield for his partner *Predator*.

'Way to go, Rage - you're now Stormtide's flak jacket!' he thought dolefully as they zigzagged in and out of the traffic.

"You got any ideas, Stormy?"

"Maybe - how about you give those cunts something to think about?"

Rage grabbed hold of Stormtide's belt with his left hand as he twisted his body around so that he could aim his pistol. He squeezed off two shots at the nearest motorcyclist giving him pause for thought, then he adjusted his aim and sent a bullet into the windscreen of one of the Mondeos - he swore bitterly.

"Problem?" Stormtide asked.

"Nah - just bulletproof glass in the cars," he replied sardonically.

Stormtide just concentrated on keeping control of the motorcycle as she topped ninety miles per hour. Rage snapped off a few random rounds to keep the pursuing motorcyclists' heads down, knowing that they were not carrying all that much in the way of spare ammunition.

Stormtide decided that she would have to come up with something - and fast!

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As they hurtled along the A338, they barely gained an inch on their pursuers. Stormtide, being the incredible bookworm that she was, had poured over maps of the area just the previous afternoon. Her memory was able to recall the road in her head. She matched that with what the satnav screen, mounted in front of her, was showing of the road ahead. Leaving the braking until the last second, she took the exit for the B3073 taking the sharp curve at speed before braking more heavily as they approached the T-junction at the end of the slip road. Stormtide was able to slip past three cars and then caught an amber light as she turned right. With a smirk, she saw the two Ford

Mondeos join the queue for the traffic lights while the motorcycles headed up the centre and stopped at the white line.

Stormtide rode up Christchurch road. She slowed a short distance later as traffic stopped for a roundabout. Stormtide growled as Rage nudged her and she looked into her right-hand rear-view mirror. She saw the three black-clad motorcyclists gaining fast. She took a right turn and then a left onto Matchams Lane. The Mondeos were back and the motorcyclists allowed them into pole position behind the fleeing *Predators*. The road was not wide and overtaking was difficult, if not suicidal.

"Rage - aim between the headlights," Stormtide shouted.

Rage twisted in the saddle and he squeezed off two shots. The first bullet skimmed off the bonnet with a flash of sparks while the second vanished inside the engine compartment. Rage noticed the look of consternation on the face of the driver as he fought to control his car. Steam was being emitted from both sides of the bonnet and the car began to weave as the engine began to overheat as a direct result of the damage to its primary cooling radiator being damaged and the coolant which splattered all over the road. The engine failed completely as the bullet-nicked fuel line split completely spilling diesel onto the road to join the coolant. As various other systems failed, the large vehicle to swerve across the road into the soft banking at the side of the road. The Mondeo behind slammed on its brakes and narrowly missed colliding with its damaged twin.

The three motorcycles, however, were able to slip through the small gap at the rear of the crashed Mondeo.

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"Two cars down, but we've still got the three two-wheelers," Rage called out.

"Three is better than five, in my book, Rage!"

Stormtide knew that the other motorcycles had the edge on the long straight road, but the road was also lethal as it undulated up and down enough to have cars 'catching air' for a fraction of a second - on a motorcycle at speed, it was lethal. Stormtide had noticed a car ahead leaping and then bottoming out with a grinding of metal ahead of her, so she slowed down as she went over the hump and came down with a thud having warned Rage to hang on tight. The first motorcycle only had eyes for his targets and he was caught out as his heavy machine went airborne before coming down hard and he wobbled before his motorcycle became a flying lump of metal and he was thrown onto the road, rolling several times before coming to rest face down and remaining still.

"And then there were two!" Rage commented darkly.

His companions noticed the crash and they quickly applied their brakes just in time to avoid an identical fate. Stormtide accelerated keeping a wary eye open for the next undulating dip.

Four more times she braked and they caught air before coming down with a thump. Rage loved it and he was laughing despite the looming danger behind them. Stormtide had to admit that it was an exhilarating ride. Ahead, Stormtide noticed the sign she had been looking for and she took a hard-left turn heading into the rear of Bournemouth International Airport. The road quickly narrowed and passed over some boggy ground before opening up again. The road, Mountbatten Drive, curved around the right and then to the left as it negotiated various storage areas. After about half-a-mile, Stormtide had an idea and she took a right into some trees up a small concrete road which was overgrown and appeared abandoned. Another right brought them up to some abandoned Nissan huts that had to be fifty to sixty years old. They were covered in vegetation and they provided a perfect place to hide the KTM.

Neither *Predator* spoke as they prepared their meagre weapons and stood ready to ambush the motorcyclists. Their engines were audible as they slowed down having lost immediate sight of the fleeing KTM. One rider turned up the overgrown concrete road then he stopped. He studied the ground and then he smirked behind his visor; he had noticed a fresh tyre impression in the mud beside the concrete. He was too focussed on his task to consider that Stormtide might have left the track on purpose - which she had. The man was cautious, though, and he stopped his motorcycle ten yards in, cutting the engine.

He dismounted and then pulled a Heckler & Koch MP7 PDW out from one of his two panniers and cocked the weapon before moving slowly towards the Nissan huts.

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Stormtide was taking point while Rage would provide cover. Stormtide had watched the man approach and communicated the fact that he was alone to Rage who had acknowledged. No sound was made by either of the *Predators*; they relied on hand signals to communicate as they listened to the man's very cautious approach. Rage would attack first with Stormtide covering his back - there was another rider out there and they were not about to make a rookie mistake and forget that!

Rage waited behind the overgrown Nissan hut and he listened for the footfalls coming closer. The rider was good but he was not silent. Stormtide had used a small mirror to peer around the corner (Jamie teased her relentlessly about that mirror - she used it to check her hair: 'every thirty seconds' as far as Jamie was concerned) and she could see that the man had removed his helmet. He was Caucasian and he looked like he could handle himself - his face bore a short scar just below the left eye and (Stormtide had thought) he looked mean.

The leather-booted lower leg appeared in Rage's vision and he slashed out with his knife, ramming it into the man's thigh. The man bellowed out in agony as bright red blood fell onto the greenery around the abandoned buildings. Stormtide kicked him in the head

while Rage stamped on his face. The man's yells ended smartly as he lost consciousness. Without a moment's hesitation, Jamie swept up the MP7 and slung it over his shoulder. He checked to ensure that the magazine was full before running back towards the man's ride. Stormtide quickly frisked the man and she seized three 17-round magazines full of nine-millimetre ammunition. His pistol was just added weight which they had no need of at that point.

Stormtide pulled the KTM from the undergrowth and she pushed the machine back to the concrete road before mounting the machine. Rage ran up with two spare 20-round MP7 magazines in his grubby little mitts, both of which quickly vanished into the KTM's left pannier. Stormtide had barely restarted the engine when they heard a high-powered machine heading in their direction at speed. Stormtide accelerated hard and she raced past scar-face's machine which was on its side and with obvious damage to its electrical system. Stormtide raced out of the concrete side road and headed south past Cobham Aviation Services with the solo black-clad motorcyclist in hot pursuit.

Stormtide took a hard left onto the main taxiway.

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The pair of fleeing *Predators* followed the taxiway which curved towards the end of Runway 26. As Stormtide came up to the white-painted threshold markings at the very end of the runway, she blanched as a Ryanair Boeing 737-800 came up the opposite taxiway from the Main Terminal. The aircraft slammed on its brakes as the pilot saw the orange motorcycle ahead of him. Stormtide had no choice but to turn down Runway 26 and she accelerated hard, topping one hundred miles-per-hour as she went before she slowed and took a right towards Honeywell Aerospace.

The entire way, they were pursued by the black-clad motorcyclist . . . and a flurry of yellow-painted airport vehicles and two police vehicles. As Stormtide manoeuvred her way past Honeywell Aerospace, she was able to pick up an exit route which took them both beyond the airport's boundary, at Chapel Gate and Parley Lane. They raced down Parley Lane and Rage got a bullseye as he put a bullet into their pursuer's helmet, sending the rider spinning off his ride which crashed into the airport boundary fence. The dead body struck a passing car, smashing the windscreen.

"Not bad if I do say so, myself," Rage preened as Stormtide just shook her head in disgust.

Stormtide grinned inside her helmet - they were in the clear and away from Scorpio. She felt the squeeze around her waist and she knew that Rage was thinking exactly the same thing. Forty-five minutes (and another number plate) later, they were heading up the A31, towards London.

"How many of those damn things have you got?" Rage had demanded as the latest number plate had been applied.

"A good magician never gives away their secrets. . ." had been the cryptic response.

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### ***That evening***

#### ***London***

#### ***East End***

It was a shithole, but the bastard who ran it was happy to accept cash without a credit card for the deposit. The KTM was locked up in a back alley and covered in a very dirty tarpaulin.

They were exhausted but their training precluded their immediate return to the Mayfair house. They would need to scout the area to ensure that it was safe to go back there and that could only be done when fully awake and at one-hundred percent readiness. Instead, they both showered and ate a take-away pizza before they slipped into the same double-bed together.

They both fell asleep within seconds.

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### ***Wednesday, August 31<sup>st</sup>***

#### ***Mayfair***

They had spent three days watching the house.

Nobody had come near it and no lights had come on after dark. As far as they could tell, it was just as empty as when they had left it. Shannon made the decision to check it out and she went right up to the front door, inserted the key, and went inside. Everything looked just as they had left it. She went back outside, locking the front door as she went. She nodded at Jamie, and they both headed back to their hovel to retrieve their equipment. Shannon decided against moving the KTM and it was left under the tarpaulin where it had sat for the best part of a week.

Two hours later, they were back. Shannon unlocked, just as before, and they both headed upstairs, dumping their packs beside the garage door as they went. Their first stop was the kitchen to grab a cold can of Coke each from the fridge. Jamie headed for the living room to watch TV while Shannon took a long pull of her Coke before she turned to follow Jamie.

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"Welcome home, Jamie."

Jamie's mouth quite literally dropped open as he came face to face with William Fraser, Managing Director of Scorpio Enterprises. The man was sitting, quite comfortably it seemed, in one of the chairs in the living room.

"You going to introduce me to your bitch?" he asked calmly as Shannon was dragged into the room by a large goon and another seized hold of Jamie.

She was struggling to break free of the iron grip on her arms, but to no avail.

"Go fuck yourself, grandpa!" Jamie growled in response.

"Any chance either of you knows where my deputy head of security, might be?"

"Which part?" Shannon retorted.

"So, it was you who killed him."

"I'm thirteen-years-old, arsehole - I don't kill people!" Shannon retorted.

"Is that so. Thanks to you, I have had to clear up more corpses that I would have liked. Do you know how much it costs to make a dead body disappear?"

"Five quid?" Shannon responded facetiously.

Fraser stood up and he backhanded Shannon across the face.

"You two have meddled in my affairs for long enough; you will both serve me - or you will die, here and now," Fraser said in an even tone.

"Kill us," Jamie retorted as she struggled in the goon's iron grip.

"I'm ready to die," Shannon acknowledged.

Fraser shook his head.

"There's no need for any of that. I'm sure we can find something worthwhile for you two to do within my organisation. I know of people who would pay top money to stick their penis inside that cunt of yours. You still a virgin, or are you the slut that I think you are?"

Shannon did not reply, she just seethed and struggled even harder to make her escape.

"Oh, you will do well, girl - I think you will be a very great asset. As for you, Jamie - I can make money from you, too. There are rich men out there who would pay thousands for a night with you. Conversely, some very rich women would enjoy having both of you for a night or two. I myself have no interest in those goings on, nor the movies that are made, however, the money is very, very good. Unfortunately, for you, girl, you'll be all but spent by the time you turn eighteen."

Shannon glanced at Jamie as both were restrained with plastic cuffs at their wrists. They were in trouble.

So much trouble.

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It was Jamie's goon who made the mistake.

The man was taking Jamie downstairs when Jamie suddenly went limp and almost fell down the stairs. The goon grabbed him by both arms - the 'goods' were *not* to be damaged in *any* way. . . Jamie took the opportunity to bring his feet up and his cuffed wrists forward. Within a second, he had his wrists in front of him and two seconds later he had broken the plastic cuffs. The goon seemed very slow on the uptake and was obviously more muscles than brains. Jamie drove his head backwards and smashed the goon's nose - the goon dropped Jamie who rolled forwards and flipped down the stairs, landing on his arse at the bottom.

Jamie dived for a hidden pistol which sat in bottom of a wellington boot. He grabbed the magazine from the other boot and loaded the pistol, racking back the slide to chamber a round. The goon on the stairs found himself staring into a pistol. The stupid idiot reached for his own but before his hand had moved six inches, he was dead with a bullet in the head. Jamie leapt over the idiot's inert body and he came face to face with Shannon and her captor. Jamie never hesitated as he dropped the man with a single bullet to the head. Shannon issued a muted scream as some of the man's blood splashed across her face but she quickly appropriated the man's pistol before diving off to one side as machinegun fire shredded the stairway.

"I think we might have overstayed our welcome," Jamie yelled over the raging gunfire.

"Me, too," Shannon replied as she grabbed Jamie's hand and they both ran towards the door to the street, sweeping up their backpacks as they went.

A large man stood there, armed with an automatic weapon and a smug look. He fired several bullets into the floor, forcing Jamie and Shannon into the adjacent study.

"The window!" Shannon yelled as she raised the appropriated pistol.

"You, damn crazy bitch!" Jamie yelled back as he raised his pistol.

Both opened fire together, shattering the glass and the wooden window frame. They both ran at the window just as bullets followed them across the room and they both smashed through what remained and fell to the street, rolling to absorb the impact.

The gunfire ripped out above their heads as they bolted down the street.

They were running and they were running fast.