

Authors Note: This will be my twenty-eighth (published) story. The story is part of my Kick-Ass **Forsaken** universe and will use characters and events from that story. The story fits in, chronologically, after the end of **The Fusion Ultimatum** and follows on from events in that story. We shall join the British vigilante team, known as Vengeance, as they tackle internal and external threats to the United Kingdom.

As usual, I look forward, with some trepidation, to any reviews. I promise to accept all criticism. In addition, I am still British, so my spelling and grammar may look and appear strange to some.

Synopsis: In the United Kingdom, espionage, counterespionage, counterterrorism, and associated covert activities, are the purview of the UK Government Agencies known as the security services. This primarily covers the Security Service (MI5), the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS/MI6) and the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ). It also covers Special Branch and the Metropolitan Police Anti-Terrorist Branch.

During April 2015, an unscrupulous MI5 Officer, Mitchell, coerced Hit Girl and her team to engage in covert activities on the British Mainland. Principally, Fusion were to be unpaid assassins at the whim of Her Majesty's Government (HMG). The coercion was uncovered, and Mitchell subsequently removed. Hit Girl and Fusion were released from their burden with the grateful thanks of HMG. (See my story: **Hit Girl Hits Britain**)

What occurred, however, got some members of the Security Service thinking. Thus, in mid-December 2015, Vengeance was formed and indirectly funded by MI5. The idea of being able to 'remove' those who demonstrated a great threat to the realm appealed to some. Vengeance was intended as an off-the-books organisation which while disciplined, would also be highly illegal. However, HMG trusted Fusion and what it represented, and they respected what it had accomplished.

Vengeance was also a deniable asset and all funding and support could be cut off at the whim of HMG. Until then, HMG would turn a Nelsonic blind eye towards Vengeance's actions as long as they kept their activities well away from the front page of the national tabloids. Where necessary, HMG would also take credit for any successful operations.

Sunday, May 22nd, 2016

Vengeance Command Centre

Location: Edinburgh, Scotland

The Jaguar F-Type R AWD Coupe roared up the narrow access road at speed.

The Italian Racing Red sports car took the final curve at around 50mph before the carbon-ceramic brakes brought the supercharged 186-mile-per-hour beauty to a tyre screeching halt.

Eighteen-year-old, Natasha King jumped out of the right-hand-side of the car and she jogged up the steps to the front door of the large mansion. The wooden door clicked open automatically before her hand could reach for the recessed number pad to the right of the door frame. She passed through the reception hall and she took the second left through a door and she then turned immediately right. An eight-digit code was entered into a keypad before the door was released.

Once through that door, Natasha then turned to the left and walked down the steps to the lower ground floor of the mansion. At the base of the stairs, she turned right and walked towards a door that was again secured by a keypad.

Another eight digits later, and she stood in the Vengeance Control Room. On the wall before her there were three large 65-inch flat panels arranged horizontally. To the left was a large control station with a tall youthful looking young man who sat in front of a pair of 27-inch touchscreens that lay before him at a shallow angle.

As the young man expertly ran his fingers over the screens, information on the larger flat-screens changed at almost lightning speed.

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"Bet, you're glad to be home, Eric."

Eric looked up forlornly at the face that occupied the centre giant screen.

"I miss you, Abby."

"I miss you, too, Eric."

"Oh, God!" Natasha breathed as she gave her friend, Eric Cunningham, a withering look.

"Hi, Nats!" the smiling girl with long brown hair called out from the screen.

"Afternoon, Abigail, or is it morning over there?"

"It's ten-forty, in the morning, Nats," Abigail Hunt replied from the depths of Safehouse F, in the city of Chicago, some 3,665 miles to the west.

"Oh, God, are they at it again - maybe we should fit the phone lines with condoms!" Cassandra 'Cassie' Perrin chimed in as she entered the Control Room. "Where's your charming brother, Nats?"

"He's gone to Edinburgh; 'For some shopping', he said," Natasha replied.

"Well, I'll leave you guys to your briefing, shall I?" Abby inquired.

"Eric'll be pining for you," Cassie laughed.

"Jerking off more like!" Natasha added.

Eric cringed at the suggestion.

"I can believe that," came a voice from behind Abby and the head of *Fusion* appeared on the screen.

"Mindy!" the two girls called out happily.

"Hi, girls!" Mindy Lizewski replied. "Sorry, Eric, Abby has work to do - have a nice day!"

With that, and a last kiss from Abby, the screen went blank.

It was amazing what they had built in so short a time.

Vengeance consisted of four young people. Natasha King, and her twin brother, Cameron, were the lead operators of the vigilante organisation. Eric Cunningham, at just eighteen-years-old, ran all of the electronics and computers which supported Vengeance in its operations. The final member, Cassie Perrin, was the junior operator, and the nineteen-year-old had been the last to join the team.

Of the four, as far as Eric was aware, he was the only one who had more or less been press-ganged into joining *Vengeance*. Not that he had had much choice at them time. However, when he looked back on it, he knew that he had definitely made the right choice. It had only been a little over six months since the day when he had first heard about *Vengeance*.

It was also the very first time that he had met Hit Girl - not that he had been totally convinced of his suspicions at the time.

December 2015

Clapham Police Station, London
Interview Room 3

"Eric Cunningham, you are being charged with..."

While Eric had tuned out the charges being read out to him, he was still aware that the door to the interview room had suddenly opened and that two men wearing dark suits had quite literally barged in.

"What the hell is this..." Inspector Monroe began.

"Security Service, Inspector," one of the suits offered. "We are taking young Mr Cunningham into our custody."

"Like bloody hell you are!" Monroe raged. "Who says? I've been on this little shit's tail for six bloody months and I finally have him - no!"

"Here."

An envelope was passed over to the outraged Inspector. After a brief glance at the front of the envelope, he ripped it open and his eyes went wide as he read the document enclosed. After a minute, he glared at the suits and then Inspector Monroe threw the handcuff key onto the table in the direction of the suits before he stormed out of the interview room.

A rather bewildered Eric Cunningham had meekly submitted to his new masters.

Government Communications Headquarters
The Doughnut, Cheltenham

The journey out of London had been mundane, at least until he had realised with a jerk where they were headed.

It was every hacker's dream to get inside The Doughnut - so named because of its shape. However, said hackers preferred to be doing it from many miles away and over the internet; hackers did not do things in real life. The vehicle barely stopped as it swept through the catchment area of the main gate at speed and entered the 176-acre site. Eric stared up at the enormous building that was the workplace for well over 6,000 people and the hub of all the United Kingdom's SIGINT (signals intelligence) activity.

Eric was in awe as he was led from the car and then inside the building.

Half a mile away
Cheltenham Premier Inn
Room 14

"You sure this is going to work?"

The young woman felt weird; she had never worn a military uniform before, let alone one that belonged to a foreign country. It had been the idea of Commander Lawrence to 'help them blend in' - the whole idea was crazy, to say the least! The young woman was wearing the 'general duty rig', or '3A Dress' as Commander Lawrence put it, of an officer of the Royal Navy - she wore a skirt, tights, white shirt, tie, jersey, and black shoes. On the shoulders of the jersey were shoulder boards which bore the single curl of gold lace which identified her as a Sub Lieutenant, Royal Navy.

Dave wore a very similar uniform - except, he wore trousers instead of a skirt while his shoulder boards bore the same curl as Mindy's but also an additional stripe of gold lace to identify him as a Lieutenant, Royal Navy. Mindy had no problem being under Dave - although, she preferred not to be wearing any clothes when she was... Once they were suitably outfitted, they checked each other over and picked up their freshly provided Royal Navy identity cards and headgear - a white-topped peaked cap for Dave and a white-topped hat for Mindy. Both bore the Royal Navy officer's cap badge complete with fouled anchor and crown.

"You look hot, girl!" Dave quipped as he lifted the edge of his wife's skirt.

Mindy slapped his hand away, blushing as she did so.

"Hands off, *leftenant*!"

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The drive to GCHQ was short and they stopped at the main gate where their identities were checked off against a visitors list, before they were passed through and directed where to park.

Mindy was worried for a brief moment that their 'fake' IDs would not work; however, she had a distinct feeling that they were the real thing. She was very impressed by the building; it was a weird shape - hence the nickname. The guy at the Premier Inn had asked them if we were headed over to The Doughnut. They had said, 'no comment', and the guy had just laughed. As the two officers were only visitors, they were escorted by a grumpy old git who led them to a small waiting area on the second - oops, *first*, floor. Mindy sighed as she considered the Brit's confusing habit with the way they referred to the levels in a building.

"Just remember to keep your yank trap shut," Dave whispered in Mindy's ear.

They were both offered a coffee as they awaited their appointment.

GCHQ

Eric soon found himself equipped with a visitor's pass.

He was then escorted up some stairs, down several corridors, and generally, he lost track of where he was, where he had been, and for that matter, where he was headed - which, he assumed, was probably the point.

After what seemed like an age, they stopped outside a door. Eric's escort, a tall man in a dark suit with absolutely no sense of humour, opened the wooden door with the swipe of an access card in a slot to the right of the same door. Eric was waved inside, and the door was closed behind him with a dull, and decidedly ominous, *click*. As Eric looked around, he saw a uniformed naval officer standing beside a large polished-wood conference table. The rest of the otherwise stark room was empty.

"Right, young man, my name is Commander Lawrence and you belong to me . . . at least for the moment. What happens next is entirely up to you."

Eric grimaced.

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The eighteen-year-old felt very small as he stood in the large conference room which overlooked the central part of the doughnut.

He was in one of the most feared places in the UK, if not Europe, as far as computer hackers were concerned. He was waved to a seat at the table, which was designed to seat about twenty people comfortably, so he also felt quite ridiculous as he sat a few chairs down from the head of the table. The Commander placed a pair of buff-coloured folders on the table before Eric. One had a blue label, the other a red label.

"Before you, are two options. You must select one. The first, this one," he indicated the folder with the red label, to Eric's right, "will get you access to a life that you have only dreamt about during your wildest wet dreams. The other, well, that returns you to Inspector Monroe, with the explicit recommendation from GCHQ and the Security Service that you spend the next forty years in a tiny cell, with a man who would like to see if he can tickle your tonsils from behind you, if you get my drift."

Eric blanched at that.

"Now, I will leave you for a few minutes to contemplate my offer - you may call your mother if you wish; just lift the receiver and tell the operator the number. Back in ten . . . oh, feel free to read the folders, bye."

With that, Eric was left alone.

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The young man stared down at the folders and then I opened the blue one.

It was, indeed, a transfer order back to the Met and there was also a detailed report from GCHQ, as promised, and it did not sound good. Eric closed that folder and opened the other folder.

The red folder contained a sheaf of closely typed papers and a marked place for Eric to sign. The hacker had seen redacted versions of the document before, but never an intact one in the flesh, so to speak. The document was generally referred to as The Official Secrets Act. Signing it did not bind the person to its contents; it merely ensured that the person was fully aware of the Act. The Act was Law and therefore not signing it could still get you sent into some deep, dark, damp hole for the rest of your life. Eric did not hesitate as he chose the red pill and signed the form.

With that task completed, Eric sat back to await his doom.

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Lawrence returned.

Only, he was not alone. With the man were two other naval officers in the same uniform. One was a tall man, the other a very nice-looking young woman with piercing green eyes. Commander Lawrence smiled as he saw my signature on the document in the folder.

"A very astute decision, Eric. Now, let's visit Wonderland and I will show you how deep the rabbit-hole goes."

The three naval officers sat down at the head of the table and the Commander pressed a button set into the table top. The blinds on the windows closed and a large screen TV at the opposite end of the room came on. The image was that of a young woman in an armoured suit. The suit was a dark grey with purple highlights. Eric instantly recognised the individual – who wouldn't.

"You know who this is?" Eric was asked by the Commander.

"Of course! She's Hit Girl," Eric replied. Then something struck him. "That's a very good photo; where'd you get it?"

All the photos Eric had ever seen of Hit Girl, and of the mysterious *Fusion*, were usually of a low quality. The image before him was in stunning high-definition.

"From the person that you see before you."

"You know Hit Girl?" Eric blurted out in astonishment.

"Oh, yes."

"Why are you showing me her picture? What is it you people want of me?"

"We, as in Her Majesty's Government, are setting up an organisation similar to *Fusion*, and we need some technical knowhow. I've been told that you are one of the best. You would get to play with the latest and greatest toys. You would also be financially secure for life. As an added bonus, you would be on first name terms with Hit Girl, too."

"And that name would be?" Eric pushed hopefully.

"Hit," Commander Lawrence replied smoothly.

Learning Hit Girl's true identity, so soon, was a long shot, but worth a stab in the dark. The other male officer began to talk in a cultured British accent.

"Hit Girl is a bitch – the worst you've ever come across. You think you can handle that?"

The female officer looked a little annoyed by the other officer's comments, but she chipped in nonetheless.

"Hit Girl would work you hard. She might put you in danger. Could you handle *that*?"

The American accent intrigued Eric, as did the fire in her eyes. He decided to take a leap and make a guess as to the female officer's possible identity.

"Given the alternatives – yeah, I could handle the jumped up purple bitch!"

The young woman smiled at the perceptive young man.

"When do I start?"

"How does tomorrow grab you?" Commander Lawrence replied.

Saturday, May 28th, 2016

Blairhoyle

"Girls!"

"Coming!" Naomi yelled back as she turned to her cousin. "Kaitlin, let's go."

"Just finished my hair, Naomi..."

They ran out of the bedroom which they both shared, turned left and then right, towards the stairs. They were still getting used to the sheer size of the house - it was enormous. The two girls ran into the massive kitchen where Alexandra Perrin smiled at them as they sat down for breakfast. Alexandra was to all intents and purposes, their 'mother' . . . sort of. They had only been living there for a week and it was an enormous change from the life which the two girls had been used to.

Just two weeks previously, they had both been *Predators*. Life had been hard for Them both. But then, *Fusion* had attacked, and they had both met Raven. After that night, and after a few nights in a French 'facility', the two young girls had found themselves crossing the English Channel. Naomi had only been a *Predator* for a little over a year, but in that time, she had learnt and done many bad things. As for her cousin, Kaitlin had only appeared a few weeks before the attack. She was damaged, just as Naomi was. They had both killed their nearest and dearest, Kaitlin literally a week before the attack. The little girl was really struggling, now that the drugs were almost out of her system. The guilt that she felt was like a giant stone around her neck. Naomi felt the guilt, too, only less so.

That was due to her more ingrained training.

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Alexandra, her husband, Richard, and their daughter, Cassie, all knew what the girls had been.

Naomi felt ashamed of what she had been - what she was - and she knew that Kaitlin was ashamed too. All three of the Perrins had been so nice to the two girls and they had never mentioned *Urban Predator*. Naomi and Kaitlin had arrived with nothing, but within days, they each had drawers and cupboards overflowing with clothes. For the very first time in years, they both had toys, which for Naomi was something she had forgotten all about. She had not played with anything for over a year - her 'toys' had been pistols, assault-rifles, and knives. Conversely, Kaitlin had settled in with her new toys, and she often sat for hours playing with her dolls and she never went anywhere without her Princess Twilight Sparkle. Naomi had tried to join in, only she seemed to have forgotten how to play and it had taken Cassie to help her remember.

Cassie had found Naomi crying in a corner of the enormous house and Naomi had told Cassie that she was broken and that she had forgotten how to be a child.

Updated: April 2019